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THE MAID OF MONA.

By LEON LEWIS.

CHAPTER V.

MAXLEY HAS ANOTHER SINGULAR ENCOUNTER.

I feel my sinews slackened with the fright,
And a cold sweat thrills down all o'er my limbs,
As if I were dissolving into water.

Dryden's "Tempest."

Whence is that knocking?
How is't with me, when every noise appals me?

Macbeth.

For several minutes the fisherman remained motionless, a picture of guilty consternation, and stared into the darkness before him, while an awestricken look held possession of his visage.

A fear, which seemed as withering as the breath of a storm, had taken possession of him.

"Dean—Dean?" he finally ejaculated, repeating the name his strange visitor had announced to him. "A nice joke that! His eyes would look well in the head of an honest man, no doubt! His conduct is very much like that of a quiet neighbour! I know of this, and that man in the world who can act such a part as this, and that man is the chief of the smugglers—the Sea Wizard himself—the terrible Fearnought!"

He shuddered as he expressed these conclusions, and looked long and earnestly around, as if half expecting to perceive that the eyes of his enemy were still upon him.

His soul had been moved to its depths, and the calm of years had given place to a tempest.

"He knows why I left England, does he? and what charges are hanging over me?" he resumed. "He also has some knowledge of the girl's mother—what did he mean by that?"

He continued to muse in silence.

The statements of the strange visitor respecting the criminality of Maxley had not done him any injustice.

Many were the deeds of evil in which he had secretly engaged during the fourteen or fifteen years of his residence on the island.

[MONA FALLS INTO THE HANDS OF THE SMUGGLERS.]

He had come there with his wife and child, from England, and entered upon the humble career of a fisher. His wife, with whom he was always quarrelling, had died in Mona's early childhood.

The particular crime with which he had been charged by the unknown was one of his ordinary acts, but possessed an atrocity that indicated the peculiar character of the criminal.

It was committed in this wise.

During the preceding winter, Maxley and a few companions, lawless fellows like himself, had joined together to plunder such vessels and passengers as might be cast ashore, and they had even displayed false lights, and in other ways practised the villainous arts of ship-plundering.

On one of these occasions Maxley had found a man lying helpless on the beach, much bruised and injured, but nevertheless in the possession of sufficient strength to have survived his shipwreck if he had received the succour of which he was in need.

Certain signs of wealth on the person of this unfortunate had aroused the avarice of Maxley, and he had allowed him to perish, so that he might rob the body of the valuables upon it.

This act, as appeared from the threats of the strange visitor, had been witnessed by some one, who had betrayed him.

"He must have long had his spies upon me," muttered Maxley, thoughtfully, when he had run over in his mind the long catalogue of wickedness of which he was guilty. "Who can have played me this trick? Perhaps Brottie is in his employ and confidence? As to who he is, that is a matter that could soon be decided if I had Brottie's knowledge. Strange, that I have never chanced to meet Fearnought. From all accounts, however, I think he must be this terrible visitor. He suits the character exactly. I must solve this mystery to-morrow!"

He at length became calm enough to think of measures of self-protection.

"The night is sufficiently dark," he muttered, as he scanned the starless heavens. "The lights along the shore will give me the general bearings, and for the rest I'll take my own way!"

He held up his hand to test the direction and force of the drizzling breeze, and instantly added:

"Evidently, if I could find that body and remove it, burying it elsewhere, this man would not be able to fix that charge upon me. I will make the effort."

Entering the house with noiseless steps, he examined his weapons, procured a sort of dark lantern, which had often done him good service during his prowling along the shore, lighted it, hid it under a large cloak, and took his way to a little shed behind his dwelling.

In this outhouse there was one of those little donkeys peculiar to the British islands.

Without showing a light or making much noise, Maxley secured a spade, put a saddle on this animal, mounted him, and rode away towards the cliffs of Spanish Head, keeping close to the edge of the sea.

"The tide is out," he muttered to himself, "and I can venture on the sands where—where he's buried. How dark it is! What a mist! No one can see me from the village, and a few rays seaward will do no harm."

The gloom of the night had indeed become intense. It was only by his long familiarity with the beach, and aided by the glare of the crested waves, that he was able to pursue his course in the profound darkness.

At length, after a long ride along the sands and rocks, he came to the foot of a high and projecting promontory, the base of which had been left bare by the receding waters.

"This is the place," he mused, after a long and earnest scrutiny of the jagged cliffs rising above him. "There to the left is the peak, and here is the open face of the rocks, and yonder is the ravine. Yes, yes, here's where I buried him, just under these cliffs, and here I shall find him!"

He dismounted, tied his donkey to a bush growing on the face of the perpendicular cliff, and then opened his dark lantern, flashing its beams around him.

"Yes, I'm right!" he added, placing the lantern on the ground. "This is the spot. I will be done with the job in a few minutes!"

Seizing his spade in a nervous and powerful grasp,



he commenced digging a hole in the sands, at the distance of a few yards from the rocks.

"This is strange!" he exclaimed, after a time, pausing in his work, and leaning on his spade. "I can swear that this is the exact spot where I buried him, and yet he's gone!"

A cold sweat started to his face, his knees trembled under his weight, and he caught up the lantern, flashing it over the excavation he had made. He then, with a frightened energy, set to work, digging at random, until he had turned up the sands for some yards around, and still he saw nothing of the object of his search.

"Where can he be?" he ejaculated. "Has that Dean dug him up? Have I made a mistake of a few yards, more or less? The body's gone, and, in any case, nobody can prove anything against me. Ah! what's that?"

A faint moan fell upon his hearing.

It struck terror to his soul, and he turned as if to fly; but it was repeated more faintly than before, and, summoning up his courage, he hurriedly caught up the lantern, and flashed its rays around him.

They revealed the form of Captain Wynne lying at the foot of the cliff over which he had been flung by his mysterious enemy, as recorded.

His fall had been broken by several bushes on the cliff, and he had fortunately fallen upon a bed of green and slimy seaweeds that had been gathered but not removed by some neighbouring farmer, and to this providential circumstance he owed his life.

"A fisherman, eh?" said Maxley, scanning Captain Wynne's garments. "That is to say, he is dressed like a fisherman, but don't look much like one! I wonder if he's dead?"

He thrust his hand inside the waistcoat of the prostrate man, and soon said:

"His heart beats, though feebly enough! He had a bad fall from that cliff, and it's a wonder to me he didn't have his neck broken. I think he'll recover with a little care. I'll take him home with me, and see what I can do with him!"

In a moment more he had placed the insensible form of Captain Wynne upon his donkey, and was moving along the sands, just beyond the reach of the waves, in the direction of his dwelling.

"I did not kill him," he muttered, referring to the unfortunate for whose body he had been searching. "He was merely alive—he might not have recovered under the best of treatment. For that wrong let this act make recompense."

Thus communing with himself, he approached the village, and eventually paused in front of his own cottage.

"I must not be seen by Mona," he muttered. "I must make sure that she is safe, and that her croney Mrs. Wilson is not in the house. It's late for visitors to-night," and he looked around the little village, where the lights were dying out. "But I can't be too sure. I wouldn't have this young fellow seen to-night, lest the story should get about that I killed him."

He entered his dwelling, found the kitchen as he had left it, and with a look of satisfaction went out and lifted Captain Wynne from the saddle and bore him to his own room, laying him upon the bed.

"And now to see to the donkey!" he said, preparing to carry his words into effect. "Then I can restore this fisherman, and claim his life-long gratitude."

He removed the saddle from the animal, and put him into his shed, returning to his involuntary guest as soon as possible.

His first act was to pour brandy down the throat of his insensible guest, and his second to feel if any bones were broken. Becoming convinced that he was only stunned, he poured water upon his head, and then took up the candle and surveyed him.

The noble face, so pale yet so patrician in its outlines, was at variance with the humble garb Captain Wynne had assumed, and Maxley said:

"This man's no fisherman! I've known too much of life in my day to credit such a story as that! Fishermen are not apt to have such a high-bred face, such firm, expressive lips—bah! I am forgetting myself, and going back to old times!" and his face darkened. "Perhaps this young man's pockets will tell who he is!"

With this idea, Maxley searched the person of the young man, but, with the exception of a handful of silver, he found nothing to reward his search.

Captain Wynne had carried only money enough for his immediate wants—as any fisherman might do.

"He's poor enough!" commented Maxley, looking again at the young man's face. "What's he doing about here? If he was dressed in the right sort of toggery, he'd be just the fellow to turn a girl's head. Ah!" he added, an idea flashing suddenly upon his brain, "Mona has just seen her revenue man—perhaps this is he?"

He glared at him as though he would tear him in pieces, should his suspicion become a certainty.

"If I thought he was Captain Wynne," he went on in a hoarse whisper, "I'd strangle him as he lies there in my power! I'd put an end to Mona's faith in him! After I've taken care of the girl all these years, it's a pretty story that she's to turn upon me in the way she has done, and all for some fellow that I am an enemy to, and who would crush me between his fingers if he could. It shan't go on so!"

He leaned over his miserable victim, and compared the descriptions he had heard from Mona of her lover, with this man's appearance. And as he did so, a deadly hatred grew in his heart towards him, and a murderous light came into his eyes.

"He is Captain Wynne!" he said, hoarsely. "I do believe he is. He is beginning to stir. I wonder if he'll answer to that name. Captain Wynne! Captain Wynne!"

The injured man, who was slowly regaining consciousness, feebly unclosed his eyes at the call, and moaned, so faintly that it was more like a deep sigh.

"So you answer to that name, do you?" demanded Maxley, savagely. "Perhaps he would have groaned at any other, though," he added. "I've a good mind to put an end to this fellow on suspicion," and, with the fierce light of deadly purpose gleaming in his eyes, approached the bed. "I have no doubt that he is a revenue spy, disguised as a fisherman, so that he can go about without attracting attention. Mona saw Wynne to-night, and as sure as I'm a living man, this is he! He must be out of my path—we cannot breathe the same air! He shall not live to interfere with my plans for Mona!"

He pressed closer to the bed, and stood over his helpless victim, when there came a loud knocking upon the outer door.

He started, and stood irresolute, in the attitude of fear and horror.

CHAPTER VI.

A STARTLING ARRIVAL FROM THE SEA.

She showed that her spirit contains strong minds,
Such as evaporate through the coarser mass;
As through coarse stone elixir passage finds
Which scarce through finer crystal can exhale.
Sir W. Davenant's "Pondrebert."

AMONG the vessels to which reference has been made, as being off the coast of Man on this stormy night, there was one which demands particular notice.

She was a schooner of medium size, rather old-fashioned in her build, but fitted up in the most elegant style, with richly ornamented cabins and state-rooms, and an air of neatness and luxury about her deck which showed that she was engaged in no ordinary traffic of the sea.

The position of the schooner was a few miles south-and-east of Spanish Head, where she was standing off and on the shore, waiting to see what the wind would be, so as to enter Port Erin in case of an easterly gale, or one of the western ports of the island in case of a nor'wester.

In the cabin of this vessel was seated a lady whose appearance was most striking. She was evidently tall, and her bearing was queenly and majestic. Her full broad forehead, shaded by bands of dark brown hair; her large, dark eyes, with the shadow of some great trouble in them; her aquiline nose; her full red lips, with their sad yet winning expression; all made up a pleasing picture of womanly beauty. She was about thirty-six years of age, and would have looked even younger, but for her melancholy expression.

Her dress showed wealth and a luxurious taste, it being a soft rich silk, of sober hue, richly trimmed with lace, and falling in heavy folds to her feet. Her jewels, though not profuse, were of the first water, and were worth a moderate fortune.

Her appointments were worthy of her beauty and evident wealth, a Turkey carpet covering the floor; soft, wide divans ranging the sides; easy chairs being fixed here and there; a circular table occupying the centre of the cabin; and handsome paintings adorning the richly inlaid panels. All these luxuries, however, had no charm for their possessor.

She was the Countess of Rathmore, widow of the late Earl of Rathmore, and was distinguished for her goodness and benevolence to the poor, as well as for the brilliance with which she moved in fashionable society, and yet for years a heavy shadow had rested upon her life.

Looking at the paleness of her cheeks and the singular brightness of her eyes, it would have been easy to see that some deep cause alone could have sent her forth from a luxurious home upon these troubled waters.

As she sat reclining in her easy-chair, the door of a state-room opened, and a pleasant-looking woman, of middle age, entered the cabin.

"It's going to be a bad night, my lady," she said,

respectfully, as she advanced towards her mistress. "I just opened the port, and the wind and rain dashed in like a tempest. I wish your ladyship was ashore, instead of being in this danger!"

"The night and the storm are nothing, Clarkson," said her mistress, arousing herself from her sad thoughts, and looking indulgently at her privileged attendant—"nothing in comparison with the holy duty devolving upon me. If my long-lost child is living, or if the cruel enemy of my family can be thwarted and punished, I am willing to brave any danger, to undergo any peril!"

"And so am I, my lady," returned Clarkson, earnestly. "But it seems too much to hope that we shall find her. We might even see her, and not know her—"

"You might, Clarkson," said the countess, "for you were only her nurse; but I should know her anywhere, for I am her mother! Besides," she added, "you forget that she carries the scar of a burn upon her arm, that can never be effaced. We have but a slight—a very slight clue to her fate, but I shall follow it up. Get me my cloak and hood. I am going on deck!"

The maid attempted a remonstrance, but one glance at her mistress's pale and decided face showed her that she was in earnest; so she brought the garments desired, and wrapped them about the countess, who proceeded to the upper deck.

The night was lark black, and through the gloom the coast-lights glowed like fiery eyes.

As the countess leaned against the bulwarks, she was joined by the commander of the vessel, a young man of intelligent appearance and manly bearing, whose manner towards her was chivalric and courteous in the extreme.

"Ah, Captain Leslie!" she said, turning round, and receiving his greeting. "The weather seems to be changing. Do you propose to make Port St. Mary's?"

"I am in a quandary, your ladyship," replied Captain Leslie, putting up his hand to feel the wind. "This breeze is so uncertain, that I can't tell yet to which side of the island to run!"

"Could you land me without peril to the vessel?" inquired the countess, after a pause. "Could you land me at Port St. Mary's?"

"Land your ladyship?" cried Captain Leslie, in astonishment. "Yes, my lady, I could do so, if you require it," and he glanced at the sky. "The lighthouse light will guide us, and I can set you where is a boat!"

"Then I'll go!" said the countess. "The sooner you can put me ashore the better."

"But—excuse me, your ladyship—there are no hotels there, and you might not find proper shelter among the lawless population. I beg you to remain—"

"I thank you for your solicitude," returned the countess, "but I must go! I am sleepless and anxious. The storm may drive you away from the island, and on that account I am determined to go ashore without delay. You know, captain, why I bought this vessel years ago—in order to search for my lost child! Now that I may be on the point of discovering her, I am feverish and excited. I will take the risks of procuring shelter!"

The captain bowed respectfully and sympathizingly, and the schooner stood in towards the port.

With a look of relief on her pale sweet face, the countess went below, and announced her intention to her maid, bidding her prepare to go ashore.

Clarkson made no effort at remonstrance, but hastened to pack up a few necessities for her mistress, and she had hardly completed her task when Captain Leslie entered the cabin, announcing that the schooner was off the Port and that a boat was lowered and in readiness for departure.

Taking his arm, her ladyship returned to the deck, followed by her maid, and was soon lowered into the boat alongside. Clarkson followed, Capt. Leslie took his seat, and the rowers pushed off, hastening towards the shore, guided by the harbour light.

The little trip was performed in silence, not a sound breaking the stillness save the moaning of the wind, the swashing of the waves against the boat, and the steady dipping of the oars.

Not a light was visible in any of the village dwellings when they landed, save the one in Maxley's cottage; and they made their way thither, and knocked for admittance.

This knock was the one that had so startled Maxley at the moment his heart was filled with murderous intent towards our hero.

Summoning his coolness, he hastened to unlock and open the door.

"Good evening, sir," said Captain Leslie, quietly. "Can you tell me where to procure a night's lodging for this lady and her servant? Perhaps," he added, catching a glimpse of the snow-white floor within, "you could accommodate her yourself?"

Maxley hesitated, and scanned the countess a moment before replying. Although her face was ruffled up against the wind and rain, he saw that her attire was costly, and the prospect of good pay decided him.

"The lady and her maid can stay here," he said. "My house is as good as any in the village!"

He threw open the door, and set the candle upon a table, and placed chairs for the new comers.

"Had not your ladyship better return to the schooner?" whispered Captain Leslie, detaining her upon the door-step. "I do not like the looks of this man; and if anything should happen to you here, I should never forgive myself."

"I thank you for your interest in my welfare," returned the Countess, "but I am perfectly safe here. Do the best you can with the schooner to-night. I shall look to see you in the harbour here when the storm shall have cleared away!"

She shook hands with him and dismissed him with that gentle firmness which characterizes the truest courage, and then stood on the door-step in the mist and drizzle, watching the departure of the boat to the schooner.

"The vessel has started away, Clarkson," she said, at length. "Come in!"

As he heard her voice for the first time, Maxley started and his face turned livid, while he looked with fear and apprehension at her. Seeing nothing in her manner to alarm him, he drew back into the shadow, and said, in a disguised voice:

"A rough night, my lady?"

The countess assented, but looked surprised at the man's address to her. She was certain that he had not heard her addressed by her title.

"Will your ladyship have such food as my rude cottage affords?" asked Maxley, with assumed haughtiness.

"No, I thank you," replied the countess, as she removed her hood and cloak, and gave them to her maid. "I had supper some time ago!"

She resumed her seat, and Maxley had a full view of her lovely face.

The sight had a strange effect upon him.

He seemed to shrink within himself—to shiver up his burning paper—and his face took a yellow hue of terror, while his eyes glared wolfishly upon her from the shadow in which he sat.

It was some time before he could control himself and conceal his emotion, but the lady sat before him so quietly unconscious of his actions or appearance that at length he began to recover his self-possession, and said:

"Your ladyship chose an unpleasant time for visiting our island. To come for pleasure, one should arrive on a bright, sunny day!"

It was a singular fact that Maxley had dropped his ignorant style of language since the countess's entrance.

"I do not come for pleasure," returned her ladyship. "I came here on business. I heard quite casually the other day that a man named Markington had been seen at Port St. Mary some years ago. Does he still live here?"

Maxley shook like a reed in the wind as the name Markington fell on his hearing, and he answered, confusedly:

"No—no, your ladyship. He went away years ago!"

The countess groaned.

"He is gone, then?" she said, mournfully. "Can you tell me where he lives now?"

"No—I do not know. He moved away, and that's all I know of him!"

The countess was silent a moment, and then asked in an agitated tone:

"Can you tell me if he had a child—a daughter with him?"

"He had—yes, he had a girl with him!" stammered Maxley. "He took her to France with him—"

"To France?" cried the countess, excitedly. "Why, you have just said you did not know where he went!"

"Did I, your ladyship?" said Maxley. "I—I had forgotten. He went to France—I forgot the name of the town!"

"I would give a large reward for the information," said the lady, with emotion. "Oh! if I could only stand face to face with him!"

Maxley shrank within himself, and moved back farther into the shadow.

"What has he done?" he asked, after a pause.

"Done?" wailed the countess, giving way to her disappointment and grief. "He robbed me years ago of my child—my only child—in revenge, because I refused to marry him when I was a young girl! He took a base and cowardly revenge, that proved I did right in refusing to wed him; and for years I have sought for him in vain! Oh, my child! my poor lost darling! Shall I ever find a trace of you? Shall we ever meet?"

She wept for a few moments in silence.

"Would—would your ladyship know him if you were to see him?" at length asked the fisherman, anxiously. "How did he look?"

"If you have seen him," replied the countess, "you know better than I can tell you. I would know him anywhere, I am sure. His black hair, his smooth-shaven face, so fair in complexion, his slender form. Yes, yes, I should know him anywhere!"

Maxley cast a quick glance into a little mirror opposite, and eyed the reflection of his grizzled hair and beard, his coarse, weather-beaten face, his stout, stooping figure and vulgar appearance, with a sudden complacency, and his manner immediately became more self-assured.

"And so the wretch stole your ladyship's daughter, did he?" he asked. "I hope you'll find him. If you know his business, now—"

"He was the younger son of a gentleman," said the countess—"the degenerate and unworthy son of a gentleman, who disowned him long before I refused him. But if you can tell me nothing of him, we will drop the subject. It is too painful for me to pursue. Since he has lived here, as you say, although years ago, I shall make inquiries to-morrow. Some one on the island may know where he is!"

Maxley scowled, but said, in a tone he endeavoured to render bland:

"I wish your ladyship luck, I'm sure. And if his girl's alive, I hope she may prove to be your missing daughter!"

"Thank you!" returned the countess, with her usual gentleness. "And now, if you please, I will retire. You did not mention your name—"

"Maxley—Nate Maxley!" said the fisherman, arising, and seizing the candle. "I'll show you to your room. It is my—my daughter's, but she's gone out to stay all night with a sick neighbour—yes, that's it—with a sick neighbour!"

As he spoke, he lighted a fresh candle, and threw open a door leading into an exquisitely neat little chamber, whose draperies were all of white, and setting the candle-stick upon a muslin-covered toilet-table, he added:

"I am sorry I haven't better accommodation for your ladyship, but this room is all I've got to offer. Your ladyship's maid will have to sleep upon the lounge."

The countess glanced at the snowy lounge, the white-curtained windows, the spotless bed drapery, the few rude pictures on the whitewashed walls, the neat mat on the faultlessly clean floor, and said:

"We shall do very well, Mr. Maxley. I did not expect such pleasant accommodations as these, by any means. Your daughter has a dainty taste, I see, and I shall be glad to meet her in the morning."

"Certainly, in the morning!" stammered Maxley, with a lurking demon in his eyes. "That is, if she is not obliged to remain with her sick friend. At what hour will your ladyship be called, or have breakfast?"

"You need not call me at all in the morning," was the reply. "I do not sleep very soundly, and usually awake early. Good night, and many thanks for your kindness."

Maxley bade her good night in a dreamy sort of undertone, and withdrew awkwardly, taking care to keep his face averted, and closing the door behind him.

Once beyond the observation of his unexpected guest, the fisher uttered a long sigh of relief, and his face resumed its natural colour. He shook himself vigorously, very much as a mastiff shakes himself on emerging from the water, and crossed the floor of the kitchen, looking over his shoulder at every step, and listening intently, as if expecting to hear her ladyship uttering something to his discredit. He was decidedly startled—astounded.

"Fatality upon fatality, and horror upon horror!" he muttered, in a husky whisper. "Strange that that youngster should have fallen into my hands! Strange that this pursuit should have brought her ladyship here! And what is to be the end of these things? How am I to rid myself of these unwelcome visitors?"

He examined his weapons again with a nervous and vacant sort of air, and the hard lines about his mouth deepened, as if the demon of murder were taking possession of him.

"Strange! strange!" he repeated. "That mysterious Dean, her ladyship, the revenue officer, and Mona—how singularly we have been thrown together! I must take care of both my visitors before morning. My first step is to clear the way. I must look after Mona!"

He arose, took a light, and proceeded to open the door of the apartment.

"The girl's probably asleep," he muttered, as he entered the room. "Here, Mona, where are you?"

A smothered curse followed the inquiry, for, as he flashed his light around him, peering into every corner of the apartment, he perceived that it was empty—that Mona was gone!

CHAPTER VII

MONA FALLS INTO BAD HANDS.
On horror's head horrors accumulate,

Othello.

We must now go back to the moment when Mona, looking from the little window of the room in which she was imprisoned, commenced listening to the words passing between Maxley and his strange visitor.

The appearance of the latter, of course, was sufficiently sinister and unusual to arouse both her curiosity and apprehension.

She was not long in comprehending that Maxley had been guilty of some crime, which had become known to the stranger, and thereupon had followed the discovery that this knowledge was being made the basis of a suit for her hand in marriage!

Under those circumstances, every faculty of her being became absorbed in the conversation of the two men, so directly and terribly was she menaced by it.

Her emotions, as the nature of the scene before her became fully evident, cannot be described, and only faintly imagined.

It was clear that her father was a villain; that she herself had been watched by a lawless intruder upon these shores; that there was a dark mystery in her life, dating back to the times of her mother; and that the greatest evils and terrors were being developed around her young life, and mustering to destroy her.

How helpless and lonely she felt during those moments!

The suddenness with which the unknown had been presented to her notice—the secrets he held, by which he had obtained Maxley's oath that she should marry him—and the terrible character of the man, as she, with a woman's ready instinct, perceived—all had caused the scene to appear to her like a horrible dream.

Leaning against the wall of the room, and trembling like a leaf, she listened to all the terrible words of the discussion,—listened and watched, until the lawless wooer had departed.

And then she sank upon a chair that stood near, and gave way to the fears and apprehensions that thronged upon her soul.

"What can this mean?" she whispered, excitedly, her eyes shining through the thick darkness like globes of light. "This man who calls himself Mr. Dean is the terrible Fearnought himself! I know it! I feel it! Noel said that the fearful smuggler is lurking here, and this man is he! Such a bold and villainous countenance can belong to no quiet, honest man."

As she expressed this conviction, she shuddered, remembering the tales that had been told of the smuggler's crimes, and she looked about her as if fearing to encounter his evil gaze even in that dark room.

"He seems to have a hold upon my father," she thought. "He spoke to him as one in authority—as though knowing of some horrible crime committed by my father! And what did he mean, when he spoke of knowing my mother's history? Can it be possible that the vague suspicion that has always haunted me is true—that I am not the daughter of Nate Maxley?"

With a wildly throbbing heart and an undefined hope, she reviewed her simple history, as far as it was known to herself. She remembered that a kind neighbour, named Mrs. Wilson, who had been her best friend, had told her that Maxley had come to the island with his wife and child, when the latter was less than two years old. The wife had died after a year or two of harsh and brutal treatment at the hands of her husband, and the child, herself, had been entrusted to the neighbour's care through the years of her childhood. This neighbour, Mrs. Wilson, a widow, who had seen better days, had taken a motherly interest in her young charge, and not only taught her all she herself knew, but had procured from the adjacent shore stores of valuable books, which Mona eagerly read. When the young girl had attained the age of fourteen, Maxley had recalled her to his home to preside over it in place of a woman who had officiated as housekeeper; but in the years of intimate relations that had followed, Mona now remembered that he had never spoken to her in a tender, fatherly manner, that he had often expressed anger at her education and refinement, and that he often regretted that he had not trained her to be an ignorant peasant girl.

"All this," she mentally summed up, "does not look as though he were my father! Mrs. Wilson has told me more than once that I am totally unlike him, and she believed that I am no more his daughter than I am her's! Oh, if this were true!"

She almost held her breath at the thought.

"After what I have overheard," she soon said, arousing herself to the realities of her present condition, "I do not think it safe for me to remain here! My father, if he be my father, has sworn to sacrifice

me to this villainous-looking stranger, and he is too much afraid of him to have mercy upon me. Noel would like me what to do, if I could only see him. I wonder if I could not find the cave he occupies? I must see him this night!"

Mona was a resolute girl, and having made up her mind to seek her lover, she spent no time in idle thought. She arose and looked out of the window, and saw that Maxley had left the spot where he had held his interview with the stranger, and she then listened for some sound in the kitchen; but heard none.

"He is either gone to bed, or is walking on the shore," she thought. "I must be silent and cautious, for he may be in the bedroom!"

She crossed the floor and crept stealthily to the door. As she expected, it was fast.

"The hasp is nearly broken," she reflected, "and perhaps I may be able to force open the door."

She braced herself firmly together, and pressed her shoulders with all her strength against the door. She felt it give under her pressure, and thus encouraged, she pushed with a sudden energy: the door flew open, and she was free.

She stepped into the kitchen, which was lighted by the candle Maxley had left, and saw that it was deserted.

Stepping softly towards the door, behind which, on a wooden peg, hung her hood and cloak, she donned them quickly, at the same time catching a glimpse of her father's bedroom through the partially opened door, and seeing that he was not there.

"I must be careful lest I meet him on the beach!" she thought. "Alas, that I have such cause to fear my father!"

She opened the door, peered cautiously into the dampness and gloom, and then stepped out and turned her face towards the sea.

What a sense of desolation and loneliness swept over her soul at that moment!

She felt that she was turning her back upon the old familiar life, and entering upon an untried and mysterious future!

But even in her misery there was a ray of hope and consolation as she thought of Noel, and to his love she turned as to an ark of refuge!

Although it was summer, the air was chilly and damp, and she shivered as she hastened towards Spanish Head. The waves had a remorseless sound as they swashed against the rock, and beat as against the walls of a prison, and the dark clouds seemed to hang lower upon the waters than ever.

Every nook or niche that was known to the girl, or that could be designated a cavern, was explored by her as she wandered along, and occasionally she paused and called her lover's name; but there came no answer to her save the sweeping of the winds and the beating of the waves.

At length she passed between two cliffs, or rather into a cleft in one cliff, and perceived a glimmer of light that excited her surprise.

"At last I have stumbled upon Noel's retreat," she thought, joyfully advancing towards the spot from which the glimmer proceeded. "I never suspected the existence of a cave under this cliff, and I should never have found it unless in this accidental way."

She soon perceived that the light came from behind a rock that lay against the face of the cliff, and she crept forward and passed behind this rock, finding herself at an aperture, which she readily understood to be the entrance to a cave.

Her heart throbbed wildly; but without giving herself time for thought, she crept into the aperture, passing through it, and found herself in the dimly-lighted vestibule to a cave. Through the opening that might be called a door, she caught a glimpse of a well-lighted apartment, and into this she passed without hesitation.

The next moment she realized her mistake.

The cavern was high and long, with rocky sides and top, and with a jagged and uneven floor. From the points of rock overhead hung Chinese lanterns, brilliantly lighted, that gave a festive air to the place, and under foot, carpets of various dyes and manufactures were spread, and into these carpets Mona's feet sank noiselessly. The walls of the cavern were adorned with coloured candles, stuck in piches, and these burned with vari-coloured lights. In the centre of the cave were tables laden with good cheer, meats, wines and fruits—the two latter from every part of Europe, and of the finest flavour.

But it was none of these things that chilled Mona's blood, and held her captive in the midst of that strange scene.

It was that around the long table, seated on bales from which costly goods peeped out, were a band of lawless-looking men, wearing jaunty caps, and having reckless looks, who were holding a carousal.

She realized that she had entered one of the secret haunts of the Maux smugglers—that she was in the presence of men who had shed a great deal of innocent blood, and who would scruple at nothing!

A sudden fear came over her, and she stood a moment as if rooted to the spot, not daring to stir, lest she might attract attention; and then she turned to leave the cavern.

At the same moment a ringing shout announced that her presence was discovered!

She tried to flee, but her enemies blocked up the aperture leading to the vestibule, and her flight was cut off.

A terrible fear shook her.

"Noel has no men with him," she thought. "These men cannot be honest. They must be in the service of Fearnought!"

"Ha! ha! What angelic visitor is this?" cried a jaunty-looking smuggler, springing forward and catching her by the arm, while his companions flocked around. "Come, boys, look at our pretty prisoner!"

Mona glanced pleadingly from face to face; but though admiration was expressed on many of those dark countenances, there was pity and commiseration on none!

(To be continued.)

THE BROOKLET.

AUTUMN'S rich sunlight filled the world
With brilliant beauty bright,
And wove for every hill and dell
Rare robes of golden light,
When, with the dearest one on earth,
In gladness I did rove
Where sunbeams shone within the vale,
And the brooklet sang of love.

She was lovely as sweet flowers
That proudly kissed her feet;
As cheering as the bright sunshine
That smiled her face to greet;
And graceful as the whispering waves
That did in music move
Along their singing shining way,
Where the brooklet sang of love.

Long lonely years had passed away
Since last we had clasped hands,
Yet absence held no potent power
To break affection's bands;
It only made our love more deep—
The fond ties closer wove,
As we well proved, with bounding hearts,
When the brooklet sang of love.

The sunshine wandered from the skies
And nestled on our souls,
While we strolled that rose-wreathed eve
Where the sunny streamlet rolls
Its limpid silver 'mid the grass
That carpeted the grove;
Our fond hearts chiming with the strain,
When the brooklet sang of love.

Cold winter's icy hand may bind
With crystal chains the rill—
May smoothe the dimples from its breast,
Its merry anthems still;
Yet, through life's approaching years,
Whatever they may prove,
Our love shall be as fond as when
The brooklet sang of love.

Bright angels guard my darling one
From every earthly ill!
And lend her feet through pastures green,
By waters calm and still;
May purest joy attend her steps,
Wherever she may rove,
And perfect peace rest in her heart,
While the brooklet sings of love. E. M. D.

THE EMPRESS Eugénie has ordered copies to be made at the Gobelins manufactory of the four panels executed at the command of the Emperor as bridal gifts to the Crown Princess of Prussia for a boudoir in the new Palace built for the Princess Royal and her reception at the time of her marriage. Two of the subjects are from Boncher's celebrated pictures, "Une Confidence" and "La Pêche." The Empress intends these copies to be placed in a small drawing-room of the house she has had built for her mother, the Comtesse de Montijo, at the corner of the new Rue des Champs Elysées.

STRANGE BREACH OF PROMISE CASE.—A somewhat novel motion came before the Irish Court of Queen's Bench recently, arising out of an action for breach of promise of marriage. The plaintiff, who is the administrator of Robert B. Telford, sought to recover damages, which were laid at £2,000, from the defendant, Miss Sarah Shillington, for refusing to carry out her agreement to marry the deceased. It was stated that she had induced Mr. Telford, who had been a surgeon in San Francisco, to give up his business there, which appeared to have been extensive,

and come over to Ireland, for the purpose of marrying her. He complied with the wishes of the defendant, but she declined to carry out her undertaking on his arrival in this country, and he subsequently died, but whether his death was accelerated by the pangs of disappointed love remains to be proved. Thereupon the present action was instituted. Mr. Harrison applied to the court to set aside the count in the summons and plaint which averred special damages. Mr. Sergeant Armstrong resisted the motion. The court ordered the pleadings to be amended.

THE SECRET CRIME.

CHAPTER I.

"Who would have thought it of Mr. Danforth? so punctual at church, so exemplary a man!"—the world in general took up the cry—"to think of his disappearing with some ten thousand pounds! Who can be trusted, if Mr. Danforth could not? What could have led to such a fall?"

In her chamber, the deserted wife sat and wept, with her worse than orphaned little daughter at her knee, her heart bowed like a reed before the agony of the shock. What should they do? how should she get bread for her little one?

She had never been strong, and her grief bore heavily upon her fragile frame, bringing on a second attack of the long, slow fever from which she had just recovered. Life held but little for her now. It is not to be wondered at that she should begin to feel its pulses day by day run lower without a murmur; but one thought pressed upon her—her child—what would become of her?

It was just before her decease, a few days only intervening, that this question was settled by the appearance of Mrs. Hawley, the wife of the gentleman who had been her husband's late partner.

The sick woman was too low to feel much agitated at the unexpected visit, though a painful blush did stain her hollow cheek as she murmured a few words of welcome, while the lady took the vacant chair at her bedside.

This was their first meeting since the discovery of Mr. Danforth's disappearance.

Mrs. Hawley was the first to break the pause; glancing at the little three years' old girl, who was taking a quiet nap on the cushions of the lounge opposite her mother's bed, she said:

"You have a beautiful child, Mrs. Danforth."

The visitor's voice was moved; the picture of sickness and death made her silent to those commonplace which come up naturally in most sick chambers.

Mrs. Danforth sighed as her eyes followed to the picture—the full, round face, rosy in sleep, the bright masses of brown hair, the red, smiling mouth, and daintily moulded features.

"My poor little Constance," she murmured, half-aloud, "it is a great trial to me, Mrs. Hawley, to leave her to the coldness of strangers."

"Let me take her," said the lady, her features warming, "if you should not recover."

"You! What would Mr. Hawley say?"

The sick woman half-raised herself on her elbow—a feverish glow shot over her face.

"It was at his desire, Mrs. Danforth, that I came here to-day; my errand indeed was at his suggestion."

How very kind! how noble! Why was it that Mrs. Danforth's heart froze with a sudden chill at this generous offer? that the fresh words of denial started involuntarily to her lips? She forced them back. Why should she dislike the man because her husband had wronged him? Tears started to her eyes.

"This is too kind of you, Mrs. Hawley!" she exclaimed.

"No, Mrs. Danforth; I have no little one of my own, as you know, to divide my care. You need not fear but that I will prove a kind friend to her."

The woman of fashion spoke for once with sincerity; however coldly she had come, at her husband's command, upon her errand, her heart was touched by the scene before her; the pallid face on the pillows appealed to the sympathies which lay somewhere hidden in it.

This was not just the teacher Mary Danforth would have chosen for her little Constance; she had a vague idea of it, but she let the thought go.

"I thank you," she said, reaching for the warm hand which, glistening with rings, lay over the arm of the chair; "God will reward you for your charity."

"I do not need thanks," said Mrs. Hawley, rising and drawing her furs around her. "We will consider, then, that the subject is settled. I shall come to see you again—perhaps to-morrow."

She bent over her, touched her lips with a gentle pressure to her forehead, threw a thoughtful glance at the sleeping child, and glided noiselessly out.

A great load should have been lifted from Mrs. Dan-

forth's heart; but, strange to say, it remained with an increased pressure.

She thought of her child's father, as her hot tears wet her pillow; her cruelly deserting husband—how could he abandon his feeble wife and helpless child, and quit them without a word? She thought of the unusual ferocity of his kiss at their last parting; the still autumn night, the roses outside the window, the heavy thoughts which seemed to hang upon the hearts of both; and how she had passed to the window to catch the last glimpse of his tall figure as he disappeared down the winding street. Not one jarring word had passed between them in the four years of their wedded life. Oh, how could he leave her thus?

Nearly a week passed before Mrs. Hawley repeated her call; and then it was at an earnest summons, which brought her husband with her to the sick chamber.

Mr. Hawley came unwillingly—perhaps it was natural, under the circumstances; but no denial could be framed to the earnest prayer for his presence.

Mrs. Danforth lay dying; a strange light beamed from her eyes; her voice came with a harsh distinctness as she greeted them.

"I have one more favour to ask of you, sir," she said, addressing Mr. Hawley, while she feebly pressed his wife's hand.

Mrs. Hawley, by a womanly instinct, had approached closer to her pillow.

"You have promised to adopt my child—let her hear your name, and be brought up to regard you both as her real parents."

Mr. Hawley hesitated. He had grown very pale since he stepped over the threshold. His emotion, in the eyes of the old nurse standing by, did honour to his feelings.

"It is hard for me to frame such a wish," replied Mrs. Danforth; "but I do not want my child's first year clouded by a knowledge of her orphan condition. When she comes of age, or marries, if she lives to attain womanhood, let her know the whole story, but not earlier."

Mrs. Hawley looked at her husband—she had no objections to offer.

"We will do as you ask," said Mr. Hawley, still preserving his strange distance from the death-bed, which an invisible hand seemed to hold him from approaching.

"She is so young," resumed Mrs. Danforth, a glow of satisfaction breaking over her rapidly whitening face, "she will soon forget. God bless and prosper you both for your kindness to me."

What dark picture was it which, swinging suddenly out of the past, made the blessing sound upon the ear of one of the listeners like the hollow murmur of a breeze?

"If Edward comes," murmured the dying woman, turning her eyes, with their fast-falling sight, toward the friend who still grasped her hand, "tell him I let him my love."

There was a little pause, a faintly drawn breath, too gentle for a sigh; the eyes closed as if under the soft pressure of invisible fingers.

"She is gone!" said the nurse, stooping over the pillow. "How easy she passed away—like an infant! But, ma'am, what an expression! How beautiful!"

Mr. Hawley turned involuntarily toward the bed from which his eyes had been averted; an angelic beauty seemed to rest over the dead face, an expression of joy as if some sudden discovery had dawned upon the departing spirit.

What had she seen?

He felt faint, and staggered down into a chair by the window. The nurse came round and threw open the shutters; a few cold snow-flakes drifted in, or a winter storm raged outside. Mrs. Hawley turned away from the bed with wet eyes.

"Where is the child?" she asked. "We will take it away with us."

"Down stairs, ma'am," Mrs. Danforth sent her out of the room this morning.

"I will go down. Come, John, you will feel better out in the air."

She had hardly looked at her husband—the words seemed to come out mechanically at sight of his pale face, her own frame shivered from head to foot. It was natural—death was new to her.

She put her hand upon his arm with a gesture for support as they went down the stairs.

The little girl was playing on the parlour carpet by herself, her doll hugged in her little arms, her cheeks not with the freshest of roses, her blue eyes beaming wonder on the gentleman and lady who stopped on the threshold.

"Come, Conie," said Mrs. Hawley, holding out her hand, "you are going home with me. Can you tell me where I shall find your hood and cloak?"

"Up in mamma's closet," said the little one, staring at the strange face, and plainly not making up her mind to be attracted. "Does mamma know?"

"Yes; and you may take dolly, too; it will be a nice ride. Do you see how the pretty flakes are falling out of doors?"

The child sprang up eagerly, won by the promised pleasure.

Mrs. Hawley turned to a woman who stepped out of the opposite room at the moment, in the act of descending the stairs, and addressed to her some request. She went up, and came back in a few moments with the hood and cloak.

Constance allowed herself to be wrapped in them, and held out one of her hands with a shy smile to Mr. Hawley as her new friend took the other.

The gentleman drew back without appearing to notice it, and hurried out to loosen his horse from the post, at which he stood stamping impatiently in the frozen ice and fresh snow.

"I forgot to bid mamma good-bye," said the little one, struggling in Mrs. Hawley's lap as Mr. Hawley gathered up the reins.

"It is just as well," said her new mother, gently. "When I came out your mamma was asleep."

CHAPTER II.

WHAT vision was it which sent over the face of the dying woman that glow of ineffable joy? Did the cruelly deserting, the criminal husband, for whom her tears had flown so bitterly, meet her on the threshold of that new life as true as when they parted with such heavy forebodings on that autumn eve, three months before?

Hawley believed so; no wonder that his brain—strong man as he was—should stagger under the pressure of such a scene; he alone knew that the reputed "fraudulent absentee" lay, in a bloody grave, in the cellar under his own counting-room.

It was a terrible secret to carry about in a guilty bosom! No wonder that the last few weeks had seen his brown locks begin to thread with silver, and new lines graven on his still youthful brow.

He had excuses to offer to himself, efficient and strong as any man can well have who on the spur of passion lifts a murderous hand against his brother. Hawley had unhappily conceived an attachment to and married out of his own sphere of life a gay, extravagant girl, a distant relative of a rich family, in which she had been adopted to fill the place of a daughter.

Her friends had opposed the match, but the mutual affection of the lovers persevered; and when Hawley received the offer of a partnership in a promising firm, no further objections could be offered.

Here his first step was a most unwise one; he purchased and fitted up an elegant establishment, which swallowed up the whole of his bride's portion, and, besides, drew heavily upon his own credit.

A round of costly entertainments followed; the young wife was wholly ignorant of the extent of her husband's resources; she was even unaware of the fact that he had had no money of his own to bring into the newly-settled firm, but had been received by his partner solely on account of his acknowledged business capacities.

She had brought him a dowry which Hawley, in his understanding of women, well knew looked larger in her eyes than its nominal value; and he shrank from mortifying explanations, which might be received in a passion of tears, and lead in the end to mutual recriminations and dislikes.

He weakly chose rather to take advantage of his partner's confidence by a series of false entries in his ledger, trusting to Mr. Danforth's general carelessness in business matters for security from detection, and was favoured in this scheme by a prolonged and unavoidable absence of his head clerk. Perhaps he overrated his partner's carelessness or his trust in himself, one or the two; for Mr. Danforth, one day at the close of their labours, desired him to give him a few moments privately in their counting-room. His heart failed him at the sudden request, but his quick, upward glance could detect no unusual emotion on his partner's smooth face.

No one had heard the appointment, for they were alone. He went out, moodily, unable in his excitement to trace his steps towards his home, where his wife was waiting his appearance.

It was a lonely walk, down by the wharves, that Hawley took; and as he looked off on the smooth sheet of water, he thought what a chill shroud it would make. It was long past the hour fixed for their meeting when he came back, and touching the door, which yielded freely to his hand, he, guided by the light which glimmered across the floor, stepped over to the little room which he had never crossed before with such a beating heart.

His partner and friend—in whom his first glance now detected an enemy—sat at the desk, the ledger lying open before him; his eyes turned expectantly to the door.

Both were men of high passions, and a stormy inter-

view naturally came about. Hawley was reckless with the certainty of his ruin, and in an uncontrolled moment, stung by some bitter taunt of ingratitude, whose point lay in its truth, aimed a blow at the excited man before him which fell with stunning weight upon his temples.

He fell forward upon the desk before which he still stood, extinguishing the light, which on going out left all the room in darkness.

Hawley never remembered how he came out of the stupor which followed that awful moment; his first insane thought was to rush out and call a policeman; his second, that it was possible his victim was only stunned. The last thought led him to rekindle the light, and then after an examination of the lifeless body, he sat down to consider.

He thought of his young wife, of his own blighted character, of all that must follow if his crime should come to light; by and by it nerved him to concealment, and he set himself with many a shudder to the execution of his bitter task.

There was more to follow; a plausible story must be framed of his victim's disappearance, and by and by a false account given of his stock in the partnership. In all this, as we have seen, he had succeeded—succeeded even beyond his hopes. Not a suspicion of the truth crossed the mind of the murdered man's widow; she accepted the story, and even received in silence the announcement, which of course must follow under the circumstances, that nothing was due her from her husband's part of the funds invested in the firm.

Hawley had managed this with his usual adroitness; he had discovered first that she knew actually nothing of her late husband's business matters, and if he had made assertions to others as to the amount of property in the partnership, of what worth was the word of a felon, where no one felt interested to search out the case?

"I cannot do otherwise," he said to his own conscience, "to escape suspicion. But I will be a kind friend to the poor woman; she and her orphan child shall want for nothing: I will give them freely out of their own."

How did he know that his own strong life might not be cut off in the very first hour of this public restitution?

Mrs. Danforth was dying; it was well for the poor heart-broken wife; but friends asked, with murmurs of pity, what would become of her little orphan child? A hard struggle followed in Mr. Hawley's mind: but it was over at length,—he would accept this opportunity of restitution which a benignant providence seemed to have placed in his way—he would adopt the child, win over his wife to his purpose, and she should hold the same place in his home and kindness as if she had been his own. This last plan, the first sight of her innocent face showed him it would be out of his power to fulfil; the living likeness of her dead father to his eyes, sight, and contact thrilled him with a vague repulsion. "Heaven would not accept in me this kind of atonement," he thought, "but at least she shall find in me a kind friend."

What peace does that man ever know who bears in secret the red brand of Cain, though outward honours, the hollow homage of the world, and troops of friends, surround him?

From the day of his partner's disappearance, a great change came over Mr. Hawley. The frank smile quitted his lips, his clear blue eyes shunned those of his fellow-men, and carried in their depths doubt and suspicion; even in his own home he forgot to lay aside his cold exterior, and his wife felt that a barrier, against which all her patience and tenderness were powerless, had suddenly come between them.

"I had no idea Marion had married so well," said an intimate friend of the young wife's family in conversation with her adopted mother. "I had supposed Mr. Hawley was a struggling young man of small means."

"Oh, no!" said the gratified parent, "Marion was always our own child by affection, and we should never have allowed her to marry beneath her station. Mr. Hawley is a man of fine business talents, as well as some property, and promises already to become one of our merchant princes."

The prophecy proved true; everything which the young merchant's hand touched seemed to prosper. Fortune showered her rich gifts upon him with a liberal hand. Ten years from the date of his marriage-day, he occupied a palatial mansion, and Mrs. Hawley filled with grace and ease her place in the highest circles of fashionable life.

Not one child of the three born to them in the first years of their union lived to bless their marriage; but the mother's heart, at least, gave to the adopted daughter, who knew them only as her real parents, a wealth of affection little short of what she would have bestowed upon her own. True, she had nothing besides to love; her husband, in the first short year of their marriage, had grown strangely cold and indifferent, and she was one of those whose affections are

too warra to be absorbed wholly in fashion and admiration. She had a vague idea, deep hidden in her own heart, that this little child whom she had so solemnly taken at her mother's death-bed, had more than once saved her, like some interposing angel, from that dark path into which so many thoughtless and unguarded women turn.

CHAPTER III.

"MAMMA, Mr. Herkimer wishes to see papa this evening."

They were in Mrs. Hawley's dressing-room, where Constance, with many blushes, had whispered her first girlish secret, and now clung with fond arms around the neck of the kind friend who bent upon her such loving and thoughtful glances.

"I hoped to have kept you with me longer, my dear," said Mrs. Hawley, speaking in a voice of some emotion. "This is new to me, too. Are you sure, my child, that this fancy is not a little sudden on your part?"

Constance hung her head. "I only know, mamma, that I prefer him to all the rest of the world."

Mrs. Hawley sighed. Perhaps she thought of her own love-match, which had turned out to be very little of a love-match, after all.

"I suppose Mr. Herkimer to be a gentleman of good prospects," she said, gravely, after a pause. "He is well received in society. No doubt he has opened to you his circumstances?"

"No," said Constance, softly, "he will talk with papa."

Mrs. Hawley sighed again, this time with a fresh recollection. The story of Constance's birth must be told on the eve of her marriage—would it diminish anything of her love for herself?

It was a selfish question, but it came up naturally enough.

"She is only eighteen," she mused; "I might have hoped to have kept her with me a year or two longer; but if the young man is deserving, I must not wish to cross her happiness."

The bell rang for visitors; Constance broke away from her mother's embrace, and the servant came up presently to summon the lady to the drawing-room. The visitors proved to be family connections, whose stay was prolonged through the day, and she had no opportunity to obtain a few moments' conversation with her husband.

It might prove quite as well, she thought—the lover might introduce his subject more skillfully than herself, and she much doubted if his errand would prove as unwelcome to Mr. Hawley as its announcement had to her.

As Mr. Hawley had never evinced much fondness for his adopted daughter, even in her pretty childhood, it was not to be expected that he would feel any very strong regrets at this mutual parting.

The bell rang; Mr. Hawley was told that a gentleman begged a few moments' conference with him; the gentleman's card was handed to him, and he got up to go into his library.

Constance was at the piano in the midst of a difficult piece of music. She played on resolutely, but the chords ceased to send out no harmony. Her mother bent over her, and turned to a lively Scotch song; both recalled the incident afterward, trifling as it seemed.

"Try this, my love," she said, in a voice designed to cover the young girl's agitation, "you have struck a false note, and that deep Italian melody sounds like a dirge."

A tall, handsome young man rose up from his chair opposite the glowing fire as Mr. Hawley stepped into his library.

The first look made him pause upon the threshold with a painful start. Recovering from that, he came forward, and greeted his visitor with a formal bow. What a fool he was to catch in every new face a likeness to poor Danforth!

"Your name, sir, I think, is Mr. Herkimer?" he said, politely consulting his card.

Mr. Herkimer bowed. "I am a stranger to you, sir," he said stammering, "but I can furnish you with the best possible references of character. I have begged this interview on an important errand. I came to lay before you my proposals for the hand of your daughter, Miss Constance."

Now that he had come to the purpose of his mission, his voice lost its confusion and sounded clear and audaciously distinct.

Hawley shook with a quick, nervous shudder; where had he heard those tones before? Certainly the man seated before him bore a terrible likeness in face, voice, and bearing, to Edward Danforth. He controlled the nervous emotion, and leaned his head upon his hand. "Constance is young," he said, "too young for such thoughts at present."

"Time flies," said the young man, with a scarcely perceptible smile, "to you, sir, immersed in your business cares, more unconsciously than to us."

"You have her approval of your suit?" asked her father, absently; "perhaps you are already engaged?"

"I spoke with her yesterday, sir," said the young man, flushing; "I came here with her permission."

"Had the matter gone so far?" Mr. Hawley felt as if he had little too add.

"You have not spoken of your prospects, Mr. Herkimer," he said, for the first time directly facing his visitor. "Constance, as you are supposed to know, will not be portionless, and I cannot consent to her marrying short of a fortune."

The young man's eyes fell. "I am not rich, sir; I fear not sufficiently to meet your expectations; I have some property which was left to me by my mother on condition of my assuming her maiden name, and besides my father has a good property invested in some mines, to which I may expect to be heir, but nothing to equal the wealth of a millionaire."

"You have a profession, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir, that of the law."

"What is your father's name, permit me to ask?"

"William Danforth, sir."

It was well that Mr. Herkimer's eyes were cast down, or he might have been startled by the sudden paleness which mantled his host's face, leaving him for a moment ghastly white.

"I cannot consent to your marriage with Constance," he said, rising, and speaking in a changed voice; "I am sensible of the honour you seek to do us in the connection, but I must desire all further steps to be cut short. If you please, we will consider the matter ended."

"But the young lady?" said Mr. Herkimer, aghast at the unexpected conclusion.

"Pooh! she will soon get over her fancy, and you, young gentleman, will do the same. I have company waiting in the drawing-room, will you join us?"

Herkimer declined the invitation, which seemed put in mockery, and rose to go.

He heard Constance's clear voice at the piano as he stepped out into the hall. A bitter sigh rose up with a choking sensation in his throat. Poor Constance, how little she dreamed of the blow about to fall upon her!

He stepped out into the fast-falling snow of the winter night. His heart was heavy, oppressed with a numbing pain; an hour ago he had exulted in his new happiness as he breathed the storm—now!

He found his father at his hotel; he had arrived in town the day before, and had been trusted with his son's confidence. The latter's depressed appearance revealed at first sight the secret of his refusal. Mr. Danforth listened with sympathetic attention to the particulars; if his pride was wounded at the cavalier treatment his son had received, he had the prudence to keep down the feeling.

"We will not give the matter up at once, my boy," he said cheerfully. "I will see Mr. Hawley myself to-morrow; you did not state your position plainly enough; you should have come out with the facts, when he invited the relation of your circumstances; an income of a thousand a year, with a profession promising to be lucrative by and by, are no trifles; and I should not mind settling the heirship of the mines upon you to help to bring about the marriage. Cheer up, Edward; I see no reason for desponding. The old gentleman at first sight has taken you for an adventurer."

The young man smiled, a little sorrowfully.

"You do not know, sir, you did not hear him speak. Constance will never marry against her father's wishes, neither ought I to ask her."

CHAPTER IV.

MR. DANFORTH did call upon Mr. Hawley on the morrow, a most painful and unlooked-for meeting to one at least.

Mr. Hawley was in his counting-house immersed in business when the gentleman walked into his office. The pen he held had slipped from his fingers, leaving a long dark stain on the paper before him, and his change of colour was too sudden to escape observation.

"We have certainly met before," said Mr. Danforth, grasping his unwilling hand. "Why, bless me! Mr. Hawley, my poor brother Edward's partner! I never thought of greeting in you an old friend, though I remembered the name."

He stepped; the associations suddenly called up were not of the most agreeable character.

"Take a chair, Danforth," said Hawley, recovering himself. "May I ask your errand this morning? You see I am surrounded with business."

His manner was cold; Danforth took the designated seat in silence. He had thought to find his talk an easy one; but this recognition sent a singular chill over his spirits. The aged and changed appearance of the man before him struck him disagreeably.

"I called on my son's business," he began abruptly.

"Edward saw you last night. From what I gathered from him, he seems to have blundered in his explanation."

"I gave him his answer," said Mr. Hawley, rustling the papers beneath his hand uneasily; "it is not my wish that Constance should think of marriage at present; she is still young."

"Edward," observed his father, "misunderstood you; he supposed the objection to arise on the score of property."

"That was also considered," observed Mr. Hawley, coldly; "Constance has too large a fortune in perspective, not to lay her suitors open to the suspicion of being adventurers—unless their own income were too ample to admit of such a doubt."

"Edward will have a good estate at my death," said Mr. Danforth; "at present he has a thousand a year and his profession."

"Next to nothing, sir," suggested his companion, "when needed to support a wife brought up with Constance's expensive habits. A thousand a year would not fill her jewel case."

"We were both young once," said Mr. Danforth, smiling; "you yourself married into a wealthy family while yet a comparatively poor man. I venture to believe that Mrs. Hawley never regretted her choice. Edward has entered upon a lucrative profession; why should he not be as fortunate?"

The same waxen paleness which had shot over Hawley's face at the entrance of his visitor, mantled it again. "I do not know," he said, sharply, "but I am little accustomed to leave anything to chance."

"In a word, then, you have really set your heart against the match?"

"I am sorry to say so, sir; sorry to decline the honour."

Mr. Danforth rose; the reply was too pointed to admit of further negotiation.

"I am sorry for both the young people," he said. "I confess, Mr. Hawley, I cannot see the reasonableness of this resolution."

"You look only upon your own side of the matter," said the gentleman, blandly. "If I had other daughters to dispose of in marriage, I might be no less lenient."

"How Hawley has changed!" thought Mr. Danforth, as he went out; "I did not seem to breathe freely in his presence. Well, my errand was indeed hopeless; poor Edward! I must take him away from here. I wonder if my brother's wife is still living; strange that none of my letters to her have received an answer; I may as well go to C— at once, the change will be a slight diversion to Edward. How the sight of Hawley brought up those old, old days—my poor brother! Who would have thought such wrong of him!—he was always so honest, so true in the smallest things. I wonder if he is living still, travelling in the hard path of crime; it must have been a frightful temptation to throw him from his course. Poor, poor Edward! It all seems like a dream. How can a man be so blind as to dash out all his prospects in life by one throw?"

Mr. Danforth's kind plan on his son's part, was defeated by that young gentleman's engagement in a lawsuit just coming on, and he found himself obliged to take up his projected journey alone.

It was but a short journey to C—, some forty miles, the whole distance being traversed by railway, a very great change from the days of his youth, when the slow stage-coach had rattled on day after day over the turnpike roads.

Everything wore a changed aspect as he got out at the station; new buildings met his eyes; the new walls of a towering steam factory, with its long, smoke-chimney; crowds of strange faces; but the last he was prepared for.

It seemed like a dream, that his far-off boyhood and the first eventful years of his manhood had been passed in this then quiet spot.

The short winter day was near its close, and he proceeded at once to the nearest hotel, which proved to be only a few yards distant from the station. Somewhat to his surprise, and much to his satisfaction, he recalled an old friend in the landlord's rusty face, and saw at once that the objects of his visit might be speedily fulfilled.

Mr. Scranton failed to recognize him until he had made his self-introduction, and then his greeting was cordial and hearty. "Where have you been all these years, sir?" he queried, "I thought you were dead long ago!"

"Seeking my fortune for the last ten years," Danforth answered. "And prospered—I suppose? come back a rich man?"

"A tolerable competence," returned Danforth, modestly; "money never kept very long in my hands, as you know. I was quite unlike poor Edward; but that brings me to the object of my coming here, to make some inquiries for his wife and family, if he has any."

"His wife—bless me! Don't you know she has

been dead these dozen years? She didn't live six months after he ran off—excuse me—his little daughter found a good home with his partner, Mr. Hawley. A strange freak, that!"

"You don't tell me so!" exclaimed Mr. Danforth, in his turn astonished. "Can Constance, then, be my brother's child? I remember that was our mother's name, and Edward wrote that he had given it to his baby!"

"They have no other child, I believe," said the landlord, rather curiously. "I heard from them a year ago through one of our town's people. He went into Mr. Hawley's office, but the gentleman could not remember him. They are at the top of fortune—the Hawleys—and vain of their good luck, too."

"It is very singular," said Mr. Danforth, aloud, "this adoption. What were the circumstances in which Mary was left at the time of her husband's disappearance?"

"Utter poverty, I believe. There was nothing coming to her from the firm, of course."

"What could have led poor Edward into such a step? a gambling affair? anything of that sort?"

"I never heard anything of the kind. Something was said about his getting involved, but nobody knew where the story came from."

"A bad affair," said Danforth, sighing. "Edward was the last man I should have picked out of the world to fall into ruin; there never was a better brother or friend."

A call came for the landlord; Seranton went out, and Danforth drew his chair up to the fire, and fell into a fit of meditation. Slowly out of the glowing embers before him a singular picture began to shape itself—a long procession, at the end of which stood a ghoul, on the scaffold the outline of a man kneeling with his face covered in his hands. The profile was distinct; it bore a singular likeness to some one he had seen but the day before.

"What a fool I am!" he exclaimed, starting up. "Just as well go to my chamber and try to sleep off this hallucination. I feel as though just escaping from the grasp of a nightmare."

But sleep was not to be wooed for his pillow that night; his thoughts rested intently on the discovery of the evening, Constance's adoption, coupled with the singular agitation of his brother's former partner. He rose in the morning unrefreshed, and thought he would take a short walk before breakfast, after which he decided to leave in the noon train.

New streets had been built—a broad piece of waste land turned into a green square fenced by a wall of iron railings, and bordered with fast growing elms; the house where his own short quiet days of married life had passed still stood the old evergreens along the entrance, the snow lying thick over what had been the garden; it struck him as the only place unchanged by the wear of twenty years.

Several workmen were busy with their spades in clearing a cellar for some new building, as he retraced his steps by an opposite way to that from which he had come. Just as he neared them, one of the number dropped his pickaxe, with a loud exclamation, and the others stood as if transfixed.

"A skeleton, Marks, and no mistake! There's been some foul work here!"

Danforth stepped up and looked over. It was the head of a skeleton, which the removal of the brown mould had uncovered.

"What building stood here?" he asked, breathlessly.

"An office, sir. It has just been torn down."

CHAPTER V.

MR. HERKIMER sat in his office reading over his bill for the morrow. The old cheerful look of a man at peace with his surroundings and happy in his lot had quite gone out of the young man's face, leaving in its stead the painful lines of suffering and a gloom which might not soon pass away.

At his elbow, thrust away under a heap of lawyer-parchments, lay a faintly written note which bore Mrs. Hawley's signature. Constance had received his letter, but it was the last which must pass between them; her husband had given his orders to that effect, and she felt sure that Mr. Herkimer would respect their mutual wishes, and see that the matter was at an end.

It was very cruel, he felt so with his whole heart; they loved each other, and there was no real obstacle of a grain's weight to come between them.

The law is a slow profession—save in the rarest of cases—but Herkimer had never realized the fact until this night.

A rap came at his door, a late visitor, and he got up, but not in time to give admission to his father.

"Why, father!" he exclaimed, arrested by his pallid appearance, "what has happened? are you ill? You have just come from O—?"

"I have just left the station," said Mr. Danforth, trying to speak in his natural tones, but his voice had the brokenness of agitation. "I have made a most terrible discovery; it relates to Mr. Hawley."

Herkimer dropped the brief he had held in his hand, and looked earnestly at his father.

"I have told you of your uncle's disappearance, of the fraud he was said to have perpetrated—it turns out that he was murdered!"

The young man turned white, and sat down, leaning his face upon his hand. His father took the chair opposite, and went on in a lower voice:

"In my visit to Mr. Hawley I recognized him at first sight as my brother's former partner; his agitation on seeing me was singular and unaccountable."

He paused.

"On my visit to C—, I learned that this young lady to whom you have been paying your addresses, is only his daughter by adoption, and her real name Constance Danforth."

At any other time this announcement would have excited extreme surprise, but now the young man held his breath in suspense for the terrible finale which was approaching.

"This morning, in my walk through C—, I came upon some workmen enlarging a cellar in preparation for a new building; before my eyes they unearthed a skeleton. It was your uncle's former warehouse which covered this spot, the threshold of which he crossed and, according to my belief, was never again seen in life."

"The proofs!" said Edward, huskily; "it may be the remains of some other man, and how do you know that this person was murdered?"

"The marks of violence above the temples show the manner in which he met his death. Your uncle, I discover upon investigation, at the time of his death was not a poor man, yet nothing remains to show his right to property, or the faintest proof that he had taken to vicious courses. Had I been here at the time, these discoveries would have been made in the week following his disappearance, but there was none interested save his sick wife and unconscious infant. I shall have him arrested," said Danforth, savagely: "the picture I saw in the coals last night was a supernatural vision: it shall come true!"

"No!" exclaimed his son, starting; "hear me, my dear father, for Constance's sake—God avenges the deepest wrongs in his own time: let Hawley know of your discovery, but do not visit his guilt on his innocent family."

Danforth shook his head.

"What! let him go on in his prosperity after he has taken his brother's life? Edward, I never thought this of you."

"What good will it do, sir, to bring him to the bar? I have seen the man. He never premeditated that crime. It was done under the influence of passion. If we could read his heart, I believe we would see he has never known a moment's peace since. That, though, is the confession of all criminals."

Danforth sat silent.

The haggard, wretched face of the guilty man rose up before him. No wonder at its restlessness, with such a secret gnawing beneath!

"You argue well, Edward," he said, after a lengthened pause; "but where is the clearing of your uncle's good name?"

"That, sir, is of less value than the peace of the living."

Mr. Danforth had not yet decided, but wavered; and finally resolved that circumstances should settle his course.

Early in the morning he presented himself, now accompanied by his son, at Mr. Hawley's counting-house. The gentleman was not in, and the clerk said he was at home seriously ill.

Thither Mr. Danforth proceeded, and pitilessly presented himself, sending in with his card a message that his business was urgent, and would admit of no delay. He was ushered into the sick chamber, where Mr. Hawley, in bed, received him with anxiety and suspicion.

What followed in that long interview those two alone knew; but when Mrs. Hawley entered, upon the strange visitor's departure, she found her husband exhausted, and able to articulate with difficulty.

"I have revoked my decision in regard to Mr. Herkimer," he said to her in a whisper, as she still sat by his pillow an hour later; "when I recover, we will have the marriage take place."

"When he recovered"—Mrs. Hawley soon saw that was not to be. He never rose from his sick bed; soon his mind began to wander, and he murmured of strange things. Mrs. Hawley wept; by-and-by a new light began to dawn upon her; she sent out the nurse, and chose to take the weary watching and attendance upon herself. Even Constance was denied her share, but that might be because her presence seemed to arouse the invalid into a state of almost nervous frenzy. Then came a few moments of peace

before he passed away; and then he uttered words—plain to one, but strange to the other who wept by his death bed.

"God has led me by a hard path, but He has been merciful, very merciful at the last."

"Poor papa!" said Constance, "how I wish he would let us love him and make his life happier."

She did not dream, poor innocent child, that his one secret crime had closed his life to every avenue of happiness. A year from that sorrowful day she became Mr. Herkimer's wife, and on her marriage morning was tenderly told all that her mother had desired her to know.

"No mother could be dearer," was her fond reply, encircling the friend of her girlhood in a warm embrace, "but for mamma's desire, I should never have wished to know this. And that was why papa never loved me! Poor papa!"

It was well that the murderer's secret slept with him.

There was some curiosity expressed, when a few months later a white slab rose beside that which marked the grave of the deserted wife in the graveyard at C—, with the simple inscription, "Edward Danforth;" but the interest soon died away, and no one dreamed that a handful of dust and a heap of mouldering bones were all which had been reverently laid in the quiet spot.

M. R.

THE Chancellor of the Exchequer intends, we are assured, to propose, in the present session of Parliament, a tax of one penny upon all railway-tickets issued for distances exceeding a radius of twenty miles from each place of issue.

THREE Roman urns have just been dug up at Newport, in the Isle of Wight. They are each about a foot and a half in height and one foot in breadth. Their position, as they were found, formed a triangle, and the material of which they are composed is a black coarse ware.

EVERY boy entering the Medical College after Easter Term, 1865, except the foundation scholars, the Surrey Society's scholars, and the exhibitioners, must pay to the Exhibition and Scholarship Fund an entrance fee of two guineas, and (after his first year) a fee of seven shillings a term.

THE SOVEREIGNS OF EUROPE AND THEIR RELIGION.—There are in Europe forty-three reigning Sovereigns, not including those who possess titles only. Of those forty-three, nine belong to the Roman Catholic religion, but one of that number is excommunicated; thirty-one are Protestants, one is of the orthodox Greek church, one a Mahomedan, and the forty-third is the Pope. The excommunicated Sovereign is King Victor Emmanuel. There are besides in Europe seven Republics; two exclusively Catholic—San Marino and Andorra; and five where the majority of the inhabitants are Protestants—Switzerland, Hamburg, Bremen, Frankfurt, and Lubeck.

A SUBSCRIPTION has been opened in Italy to offer a sword of honour to each of the two brothers, officers in the Prussian army, who have been compelled to leave that service for having declared that their conscience did not allow them to fight a duel. This idea has so pleased the Holy Father that he has inscribed his name at the head of the list for the sum of 50 dollars. Cardinal Antonelli, Mgr. de Mérode, and the greater part of the officers of the Papal Army, have followed the example of His Holiness, and several of the names of the officers of the French corps of occupation also figure on the subscription list.

THE lack of lions at the base of Nelson's Column, Trafalgar Square, might be perhaps met by the summary process just adopted towards a distinguished artist. Madame Rosa Bonheur had accepted a commission in 1860 from a Lyons merchant to paint a companion picture to her "Horse Fair," the sum stipulated being 10,000 francs. Five years have now elapsed and no animals are forthcoming. Accordingly the patron of art brought an action against the lady for fulfilment of her promise, and the tribunal of Fontainebleau has fixed a term of six months for the performance of the contract, past which date Rosa Bonheur, besides the cost of the suit, will have to pay the Lyons merchant 20 francs for every successive day that may then elapse before delivery of the picture.

HOW TO ENCOURAGE ART.—The following anecdote of Count Pourtales, whose gallery occupies so much attention at this moment, gives one an idea of the man himself.—The count's attention was attracted by the works of a young artist, exhibited for the first time at the salon; the name was then unknown, and it was with some difficulty the count procured his address. He wrote to request the young aspirant to bring one of the pictures exhibited to his house, which request was at once acceded to. "I should like to add

your picture to my collection, sir," said the count; "may I venture to inquire its price?" "Two thousand francs," replied the young man, debating within himself whether he had not ventured on too large a sum. "Ten thousand francs," replied the great man, feigning temporary deafness; "very well, consider the transaction as settled." The artist, unwilling to benefit by a mistake, at once explained the error he fancied the count had committed. "Pardon," interrupted M. de Pourtales, "je ne marchande jamais"—I never bargain. The young artist died lately in the zenith of his world-wide reputation, and at the coming sale two of his pictures will be competed for by more than one crowned head.

ISABEL MOOR'S BIRTHDAY FETE.

THE mansion house at Moorfields was a grim stone structure. Its massive, arching doorways, its battlemented roof, its quaint gargoyles and beautiful oriel windows were reminiscences of feudal times. An old-fashioned garden fringed it upon one side. Two straightly-clipped yew trees guarded the corners; a hawthorn hedge made the May days beautiful with colour and fragrance; there were fruit trees *en espalier*, rows of currant bushes by the walls, and such an opulence of flowers of the sweet, common kinds, that you might haunt its paths from spring to the yellowing autumn, and never miss the scent of lilac, or rose, or mignonette.

But outside the garden walls it was all bare, and bleak, and desolate—wide field beyond wide field sloping slowly to the sea.

Westward, there were belts of forest, cool, still summer hiding-places of shy flowers, and in winter, full of soft, mild, cathedral gloom, unvisited by the winds that swept the open country, soundless, save for the continuous roar in the tops of the tall trees answering to the slow, grand anthem of the sea. Far away, there was a long, low line of hills that shut out the great world—the world about which the people at Moorfields knew little, and cared not to know.

A singular race of men were the Moors of Moorfields, the last of the name living there alone in his great lonesome castle, before he brought from the neighbouring village the pretty, girlish bride who graced his stately halls so short a time.

That was more than twenty years ago; and Isabel Moor grew up alone in the world, with this wild, eerie home for her fortune.

To-day, the old house is alive with mirth—for it is Isabel's birthday. A troop of girl cousins, one from the neighbouring town, two from country homes further inland, and a trio from the village close by, are come to make the time fly merrily.

The quaintly furnished rooms are bright with the beauty that pales the loveliness of the pictured faces on the walls; stately dames in gorgeous brocades and towering head-dresses, who look down upon the follies of their descendants with sympathetic smiles.

The halls are festooned with evergreen, and its dewy coolness pervades all the rooms: it drapes the drawing-room, garlands the noble head of Beethoven over the piano, and twines caressingly around the Madonna, who stands with saintly uplifted face. White flowers gleam out from the green gloom, and now, as twilight falls, miniature tapers are lighted here and there, and the effect is like enchantment.

To-morrow the house will be yet gayer, and Isabel will laugh and sing with the rest. Yet I think in all that wild, desolate country, there is no heart so desolate and sorrowful as hers; for she was, as I said, quite alone in the world.

The sun went down with a red blaze of splendour, dropping out of sight among the clouds tossed and broken by the rising wind, and gleaming like lines of fire along their jagged edges.

Isabel put on her cloak and hood, and stole out unobserved—taking a path across the fields that led toward the sea. Here the great Moorfield rock towered above the plain, and thence, one could see the whole waste of grey water, the shelving cliffs along the shore, and the broad highway that led out into the world. Isabel drew her cloak tightly around her, and sat down on the brow of the great rock. The fur-trimmed hood was drawn close about her temples—a white, still face looked out from under it, the soft, amber eyes following the white line of road where it lost its way among the distant hills.

The twilight darkened around her as she sat there. The house windows all at once threw a red light over the desolate moor. It grew cold. The season would not be defrauded of its own. Looking still wistfully along the distant road, Isabel caught sight of a horseman riding swiftly. That aroused her. If it were only Raleigh! Her cheek flushed, her heart beat with sudden pain. She rose in excitement. But it faded quickly.

"How foolish I am! There is no hope of that."

She went quietly down from the rock and towards

home, her face pale and still again. The wind had increased, and blew now with a great volume of sound, so that with it and the cough of the trees, and the swash of the sea, she did not hear the swift-falling hoofs along the path, till they ceased close beside her, and the rider flung himself to the ground. He was tall, and bronzed, and stately.

"Isabel Moor!" he exclaimed, some strong emotion swaying his voice.

She stopped short, turning her face towards him. The crescent moon hanging low in the west, lit its sweet curves and the curls of fair hair that had escaped from the hood. With a quick impulse, the tall stranger stooped, and kissed her, exclaiming, passionately:

"Have you no welcome for your cousin Raleigh?"

She shrunk away from him, trembling violently, and only finding voice enough to echo:

"My cousin Raleigh!"

"You don't know me, then? I should have known you anywhere."

The keen eyes that looked down on her had regret and reproach in them, and his voice had grown suddenly quiet and cold.

"How could I? I thought you were far away. I am glad to see you, Cousin Raleigh."

Her beautiful eyes were full of tears, and her tone low and soft with feeling. He bent his head—gave her a searching look.

"You are pale and tired, and perhaps unhappy, too. I shall lift you upon my horse. It is a long walk to the house."

He placed her in the saddle, and walked beside her. It was the old, sweet tenderness of manner that she did not half appreciate years ago. The sense of being protected and cared for, was new and delicious. It was a long time since anyone had given themselves any especial trouble about her. People thought her brave and self-reliant, but they did not know her. Raleigh did, and he let her ride along in silence till she chose to speak.

"So you are come back from India," she said, at last.

"I am come back. Are you glad?"

"I am glad, Cousin Raleigh. You know I have no friend so near as you. The rest are all half cousins."

"You are glad?" he said, not heeding the rest of her speech; "and yet there are reasons why you should be sorry."

"What do you mean?" looking at him in surprise.

But her eyes fell under the steady, quiet truth of his.

"I will tell you by-and-by. The old wood yonder—is it just as it used to be?"

"Just the same."

And then they were both silent, for it was when walking in the stillness of the woods seven years ago, that he first told her his love.

Raleigh was brave and true, but poor, and his cousin was half in love with Felix Graymen, who wore a uniform, and rejoiced in the title of captain, and was, besides, handsome, and gallant, and agreeable, while Raleigh, in his common moods, was taciturn and absent, and never otherwise than plain. And then, when upon receiving a quick rejection, Raleigh had ventured to remonstrate against the Graymen match, she, in all the pride and passion of her eighteen years, had intimated quite plainly that Raleigh's preference for her was assumed, in order to win the wide lands of Moorfields for himself.

She remembered his answer:

"Is it possible you can accuse me of such baseness, having known me all your life?"

And then he turned and left her, stung to the quick, and she had not seen him until now. And Felix Graymen grew all at once insipid and intolerable, so that she was glad to disengage him by her coldness.

Poor Felix! He was married in three months to a beauty and a fortune, and now strokes his moustache and arrays his fine person in an elegant undress uniform in opulent leisure.

Isabel's face burned with humiliation and shame as she thought of it.

"How could I have been so ignorant? How could I have been guilty of such folly?"

Suddenly she put her hand upon Raleigh's, where it rested on the bridle-rein, saying, impetuously:

"Stop a moment, Raleigh. Once in those old woods I said something to you which I had no right—no reason to say. I have been sorry ever since. I want you to know that I am. If there was any humiliation I could undergo to show you my regret, I would not shrink from it. I don't know what possessed me to wound you so."

After a moment's silence he said, gently:

"It was not your saying it that hurt me—it was your thinking it."

"I did not think it," she cried, vehemently. "I know—I am sure that you had no such motive—"

that—here it flashed upon her that she was treating upon delicate ground. She broke off in confusion and tears.

They were now at the house.

"There is Gregory," said Isabel. "He will take your horse, and I will speak to Mrs. Dixon about your room. You will like your old apartments in the left wing—won't you? We have kept them just as they were when you went away," she said, with a faint smile.

Just as when he went away! She had cared enough for him to do that—poor, lonely child! How he longed to take that lonesome life up to his own heart, and warm it in the sunshine of his love.

Old Gregory came around the corner, stopped quite short at sight of him, and then took off his cap with a confused sense of surprise and delight.

"Bless my old eyes—if it ain't Master Raleigh—grown such a fine man, too! Who'd a thought it?"

"So you're glad to see me come back?" said Raleigh, cordially shaking hands with the old man.

"That I am, Master Raleigh. The old place is lonesome most times. It needs a master, it does. Miss Isabel don't take to any of the gallants—more the pity!" said Gregory, in pathetic tones.

"Perhaps you don't know," said Raleigh, laughing, as he followed to the stables.

Old Gregory shook his head.

"Nobody could take away old Gregory's little lamb, and he not know it. Master Raleigh, she's the sweetest girl in the country—but she don't take to the gallants," he continued, in a puzzled tone,—"the more the pity!"

"Why such a pity?" said Raleigh.

"Moorfields is going to ruin," replied Gregory, solemnly. "Miss Isabel don't understand managing. Mayhap you know something about how things are going on?"

"Yes, I know," and Raleigh grew quite serious.

"If you could help her, Master Raleigh," said the old man, eagerly.

"Perhaps I can—I hope I can." And Raleigh walked gravely away.

Up in her room, Isabel was putting on her gay attire in a strange mood—with a certain carelessness that her eager looks into the mirror belied.

"How strangely I blundered!" she said, her face flushing hotly. "I, who pride myself on my self-possession. I just as good as told him that I was—he loved me once. What tempted me to allude to it? Of course it is all over now. No man could be expected to overlook such an insult as I offered him. Oh, how blind I was!"

She pressed her hand tightly over her eyes, to keep back the surging tears; but a low sob made its way in spite of her. By-and-by, she could go on with her toilet.

"But we won't be wretched—poor little heart," she murmured, with smiling eyes. "There are plenty of things to be happy about. If we did make a great mistake, nobody shall ever know it—Raleigh Moor shall never know it!"

Then she hummed a bit of an old tune:

Heart, we have been long together—
In rainy and in sunny weather.
If we laugh or if we cry,
Who shall know, and who shall care,
Who our heavy burdens bear?
Only you and I.

The door opened, and Blanche Montgomery mild in, sweeping a stately curtsy, in tribute to Isabel's grace.

"Pearl silk and mauve trimmings! Quite rich!" But don't use those blue flowers; and don't, unless you want to make a perfect fright of yourself, wear those turquoise ornaments. These crimson lilies are just the thing for the dead gold of your hair, and with them you should wear the rubies. Now you are perfect, *ma chère*."

"Who has come?" asked Isabel.

"Only the two Rawdons and the three Leases and Harry Miles—boys all of them," said Blanche, with the contempt of twenty-five for that interesting class.

Isabel laughed.

"Tis well they don't hear you! But there's one come whom you haven't mentioned, and he isn't a boy."

Blanche's eyes kindled.

"Who?"

"My Cousin Raleigh," said Isabel, the slow colour creeping over her face.

"Raleigh Moor?"

"Yes."

Blanche's eyes flashed a dangerous fire.

"He's your own cousin?"

"Yes."

"Was a lover?"

"Was!" returned Isabel, paling a little.

"I understand. Then I am free to make a desperate assault upon him. I've heard of him—gloom—"

brave, magnificent. Just the hero I should adore. I'm glad you don't love him now, dear; it would be painful to break your heart." And Blanche gave her a searching look.

"Oh, never mind my heart," said Isabel, gaily. "That knows how to take care of itself. Come down now, and see him."

Down in the lofty, wainscotted parlour, cool and fresh and beautiful with its festive wreaths, odoriferous of the woods, and all alight with the great roaring fire that flamed on the hearth, Raleigh Moor sat alone. Like a vision in his reverie, Isabel glided in, welcomed him in set terms to Moorfields, presented her cousin Blanche, and then, still, quiet, and graceful, took her place as hostess.

Presently a tiny silver-sounding bell rang, and in a moment more they came thronging in—fair girls with snowy shoulders, stately belles and young matrons, followed by an escort of gallant gentlemen, who were, as Blanche said, all boys.

And so by twos they went out into the great dining room, and sat down to supper. Raleigh looked across the long table to where Isabel sat, beautiful and quiet, not forgetful of anybody, but scarcely mingling in the merriment.

There were toasts drunk in mirth and in earnest. By-and-by Blanche lifted a glass in her lily white hands:

"Here is to the mistress of Moorfields," and Isabel touched the Bohemian glass to her lips and smiled, and bowed her thanks.

"Now," cried Harry Miles, "let us toast the future master of Moorfields, whoever and wherever he is." It was done with a great deal of jesting, all joining except Raleigh.

"Your cousin Raleigh does not join us, Isabel," said Blanche, pointedly.

Isabel coloured, but was silent.

"Mr. Moor," said Blanche, in a low, impressive tone, "do you know that magnanimity is a virtue?"

"I think I may have heard something of the kind," he replied, with smiling indifference.

"And yet you don't practise it," and her dark eyes were bent upon him.

"It is just possible you may misinterpret my action," he said, with hauteur.

"Misinterpret?"

"He made no reply, for Isabella had risen, and waited for him to open the door.

Blanche went back to the drawing-room with Harry Miles, biting her lip with vexation.

"Now we shall have some games, I suppose," said the young man. "I propose blindman's-buff."

"Oh, of all things!" cried Blanche, who, two hours ago, had declared she detested games of all sorts. "It will be such a capital revenge to catch my Lord Raleigh at fault," she said, under her breath.

But to her chagrin, "my Lord Raleigh" declined to be caught at a disadvantage, and Blanche's discontent was at its height when old Gregory entered, and sought his mistress, speaking to her in a low tone:

"Mr. Beardsby arrived!" exclaimed Isabel, in astonishment.

Mr. Beardsby was a man of business, a grey-headed, plodding lawyer of the Slowcome school, the last man in the world to be found a hundred miles from home on a winter's night, without the best of reasons. It was not strange that Isabel was surprised.

"Yes, ma'am," said Gregory, "he's come, and he wants especially to see you alone."

"Alone!"

A dread foreboding of evil swept over Isabel. In a moment she smiled at it. What had she to fear? She had no dear ones to lose. She moved toward the door. But Raleigh stood in her path.

"Let me see Mr. Beardsby in your stead!"

Isabel looked at him. His face was pale and full of pity for her. Now, indeed, she was terrified.

"Oh, Raleigh, what has happened?"

He drew her out into the hall, tenderly holding the little, cold hands that clung to him.

"Let me see him in your stead, Isabel."

The gentleness in his voice thrilled her. In her old girlish way, she said:

"Something is coming that you dread for me, Cousin Raleigh, but you forget—I have no one to lose. It is some trouble about money, perhaps. That is nothing," and she attempted to move away.

"Don't go!" he said, still detaining her.

"Yes, I must know it, you see—thank you, Raleigh. I had better go now."

"Yes, she must know it, I fear she must," he said, as if forgetting her presence.

They walked along the corridor, and were now opposite the library where Mr. Beardsby was sitting. Hearing voices, that gentleman opened the door, and looked out, made a profound obeisance to Raleigh Moor, and invited him to be present at the conference, "as, indeed," said the lawyer, blandly, "you have every right to be."

"No, I thank you," said Raleigh, and the door closed upon Isabel and Mr. Beardsby.

"My dear young lady," said the lawyer, standing before the fire, with his hands behind his back, "I am extremely sorry to disturb your festive ties, and nothing but my as-su-rance that you would wish to act promptly in the matter, induced me to make this journey at the present time."

"I am much obliged to you, Mr. Beardsby. You have something unpleasant to say to me? Certainly, I wish to know it at once," returned Isabel, alarmed.

"I ap-pre-hend-ed, Miss Isabel, that you had learned what I may call the main fact of the case from your cousin."

"No, Raleigh has told me nothing, though I see he knows."

"Knows? Of course he does, and I must say that Mr. Raleigh Moor has acted in the most honour-able manner," said Mr. Beardsby, with great deliberation.

"Mr. Raleigh Moor remarked to my partner, Mr. Amaden, whom he consulted immediately upon his return to this country, that he himself would never have taken any steps in the matter. Our attention was directed to it by Messrs. Percival and Florence, acting in what they conceived to be their client's interest. It is due to Mr. Raleigh Moor to say, that as soon as he was informed of the action they had taken, he interposed to stop the proceedings—a most honourable proceeding on his part—but I"—

"Mr. Beardsby, you forget that I do not yet know what you are speaking of," said Isabel. She got up from the chair which he had placed for her, and stood by him, looking pale and anxious.

"My dear Miss Isabel, it is a most complicated case," said the lawyer, rubbing his hands in professional delight in the entanglement. "I am not sure that we might make such a formidable show of authorities as would induce him to enter a *notte prosequi*, provided he wished to push it. English law"—

Isabel stopped him on the threshold of that ponderous theme.

"Please tell me what it is all about."

And at last the facts forced their way through his circumlocutions.

She was not the mistress of Moorfields. An old paper had been discovered, authentic and indisputable, entailing the estate and its appurtenances upon her cousin Raleigh. And all these five years she had been living as if she were the heiress. She listened in a kind of apathetic resignation, to Mr. Beardsby's prolix explanations. Only one thing was quite clear to her. Raleigh must have his own again without delay.

After half-an-hour had passed, Mr. Beardsby went down stairs. He found Raleigh walking up and down the hall.

"She sent me to ask you to come to her," said the lawyer.

In another moment Raleigh was standing by her, looking down into her pale face.

"I never meant—" he said, passionately.

She interrupted him.

"I know—Mr. Beardsby has told me. You did not mean I should know. It was like you, but that would not do, Raleigh. I shall give up Moorfields to you at once."

"You know I will never take it!" he cried.

"I hope it won't give you as much trouble as it has me," she continued. "I've been a very poor manager—Gregory will tell you that. I am sure you won't be hard on me, Cousin Raleigh, about the arrears of rent. I haven't money enough in the world to pay you."

She looked up at him with a smile. He wound and unwound a stray curl of soft hair that had escaped from her net, a singular light playing over his face.

"Well, I'll turn you out of doors, and what then?" he said.

"I shall give up Moorfields to you, and then I shall go—I shall—Heaven help me, I have nowhere to go!" she cried, a sense of her utter loneliness sweeping over her for the first time.

She shook with the tempest of sudden grief, and would have sunk down to the carpet at his feet. But he held her fast in his arms.

"What do you take me for, Isabel? Moorfields shall always be your home, if you will. I came here to ask you to be for ever its mistress. You refused your love to me years ago—will you give it me now? I came all the way from India to ask you that question."

For one moment all the past died away from Isabel's memory—all the anticipated loneliness of the future—swept away by the flood of delight in his love, lost in the heaven of happiness that his words opened to her. But instantly came back to her the scornful refusal she had given him, her bitterly repented aspersion of his motive. And now, he was the heir, and she the beggar. Could she accept him now without shame? Her pride rose at the thought.

"Let me have my answer, Isabel!"

His voice was cold, almost stern. The very intensity of his emotion made it so, and he looked down at her with a pale, fixed gaze, where Isabel could not see any tenderness. Was this a sacrifice he was making for her? Did he mean in this way to make her amends? Her proud head was lifted, a wave of colour swept over the beautiful, haughty face. She drew back a step, all her pride showing in the gesture.

"It is enough—I am answered," he said, the sharp words cutting the air like steel. "At least, you will remain until after these festivities are past. I cannot turn your guests—I beg your pardon—my guests out of doors. I must beg you to assist me in entertaining them. So much even a rejected lover may ask," he concluded, bitterly.

"I will stay willingly," said Isabel, very quietly and coldly. "I asked Mr. Beardsby to explain it to them down stairs. If you go down, I think you will receive their congratulations."

She did not mean it as a taunt, but it hurt him sorely. He strode out of the library in angry silence. Isabel dropped in a corner of the sofa, covering her face with her hands, and sobbing:

"Oh, Raleigh! Raleigh!"

Down stairs they were talking the matter over the next day.

"So the Master of Moorfields declined to drink his own health," said Blanche, in her sharp way. "It was very sensible, considering all things. Now the question arises, who is to be the mistress of Moorfields?"

"Miss Isabel would do admirably," said Harry Miles. "I wonder if Mr. Raleigh Moor will find that out? I've half a mind to suggest it to him."

"Do so, I beg," returned Blanche, mischievously. "I should like to see you. There he is." And they both looked from the window and saw Raleigh pacing up and down the avenue.

Harry shrugged his shoulders.

"Excuse me. I'd as soon encounter the Grand Mogul."

Indeed, Mr. Raleigh Moor did not seem to be in just the right mood for congratulations. He went about among the merry-makers like a shadow, and Blanche exhausted all her arts and graces—and her repertoire was neither scanty nor despicable—without making the least impression upon him.

The hours went by. Raleigh held long conferences with Mr. Beardsby, and at last that gentleman went up to town. The next day vanished in purple mist that swept up from the sea, and folded itself around the setting sun. The twilight grew into an almost starless night. A wan, grey cloud spread slowly over half the heavens. A few flakes of snow fell, fore-tokens of the storm close at hand.

At midnight some one opened the massive hall door, and let himself out into the night. The great black mastiff arose, and stretched himself in his kennel, as the intruder passed his door. But Lion knew him well. He had galloped after him over the moors when the tall man was a boy.

"Good-bye, Lion, old fellow. You'll never see me again," and a hand caressed the creature's shaggy black head. "But you'll have good care, old dog. I know who would be thankful for half as much kindness as she gives you—and gets nothing. But no matter," and he passed on.

The horse standing in the stable knew its master's footsteps, and gave a low neigh of pleasure, rubbing its cold nose along his sleeve.

"Softly now, Ladybird! Put your white feet down softly—nobody must know we are going. They'll miss us on the morrow, but no one will be the sadder for our going away. Now, Ladybird!"

He led the horse down to the gate, and then springing into the saddle, cantered swiftly down the highway, the soft turf by the edge of the avenue deadening the tramp of hoofs. Then he looked back. The old, grey, stone pile was still and dark, except where a faint glimmer from one small window in the right wing stole out into the night. The horse stood still. The slow minutes passed. It was hard to go. What he had hoped for was so different! But then it was useless to stay. There was no room for hope any longer.

"Let her go, then—the proud, cold, beautiful creature! She cannot help my loving her, if she would. And she must stay at Moorfields till—she finds some other home."

With that thought stinging him, Raleigh Moor turned his back upon the old house—standing still, and grim, and dark—as he believed, for ever.

It was a gloomy night. No person, except one familiar with the country, would have found it easy to pick his way over the seven rough miles that lay between Moorfields and the nearest station. But Raleigh Moor knew every inch of the way. He had traversed it all when a boy—never thinking that he should ever carry away from Moorfields so heavy a

heart as now beat in his bosom. Three miles off, there rose a high hill, from which the old house was plainly seen. Climbing its summit, Raleigh drew rein, and turned to take a last look at Moorfields.

Instantly, and with a sudden exclamation, he rose in the saddle, gazing eagerly, scarcely knowing whether he were awake or dreaming. The black pile rose far off against the sky, and from the windows, that had been closed and dark, red banners of flame were flung out into the night. And while he looked, the great front blazed out in one red cloud of fire!

Raleigh Moor wheeled his horse, and galloped madly back towards Moorfields. It was a terrible ride. The road was all alight now. No need now to pick one's way carefully, avoiding mire and fen. No need for stealthy movements now. On with a tramp, and a clatter, and a dreadful, heart-breaking fear that he would be too late!

All sound asleep in the old house, he thought. Oh, if the flames cut off the stairways, and he was not there! As he drew nearer, the grim battlements and old feudal symbols stood out distinct, unharmed by the hissing, fiery tongues that leapt around and caressed them. Each window was the portal to a cavern of fire. The quaint faces above the cornices looked down in strange mockery. Every object in the lurid foreground was fully outlined—the crowd of servants running hither and thither in wild alarm, the little group who had escaped from the building, and Harry Miles's tall figure trying to organize some efficient service. And now he heard the cries of the women, and the loud baying of the old mastiff from his kennel. In another moment he was among them, asking, with pallid lips:

"Where is Isabel?"

No one knew. Her room was in the right wing. It might be possible to pass the stairways, but there were the long corridors to traverse; the apartments were doubtless filled with smoke; even now the flames were belching from the windows just below Isabel's.

Raleigh listened indifferently, while they crowded around, endeavouring to dissuade him from a hopeless attempt. All the time he was making ready for the venture.

"Unloose the dog."

With trembling fingers, old Gregory unchained the mastiff, and at a call from Raleigh the noble creature bounded to his side.

"Now, Lion, good fellow!—come, Lion!"

He ran round to the rear of the building. Here was a narrow stairway, yet untouched.

"Now, Lion, find your mistress!"

Lion whined around him, eying him with an intelligent, wistful face, and when Raleigh sprang up the stairs, leapt forward, and followed close behind. The air was hot and suffocating. Great clouds rolled out, and blinded and choked him. Still Raleigh pressed forward, exploring room after room, calling upon her name, and urging on the dog in the search. At length Lion bayed loudly, cleared at a leap a narrow river of fire and disappeared in the smoke. Raleigh followed, and found himself in a little room remote from the main wing, and as yet quite secure. A gleam of white garments in a corner—a tender, despairing cry!

"Oh, Raleigh, Raleigh, my love! why did you come? You cannot help me."

She flung herself into his arms, her beautiful hair pushed wildly back from a face white as death. The terrible glare of the fire was over them both. It lit Raleigh's face, grown strangely proud and full of joy.

"You love me, then!"

He held her in his arms and kissed the wan cheek and fair hair. All at once, she knew that he loved her, that he had always loved her, that he always would love her. Oh, the fervid tenderness that so appealed to her for answer! It came warm and quick from a full heart.

"I love you, Raleigh. Oh, why did you come! I would have died alone here, sooner than you should have put your life in peril." Yet she clung to him, shuddering. "There is no hope," she murmured.

A snifle was in his eyes. No, it was not too late. Yield to the fire-fend now? It was not possible! He picked up her shawl from the floor, wrapped her in it, and then drenched himself and her in water. Only one or two raging gulfs of fire to cross, and beyond, safety—if God pleased.

"Now for life and happiness! Lion, go—find the way, good fellow!"

The dog cleared the space at a long bound. A moment's hesitation. No alternative. A dizzy height above the ground—descent was impossible. This was the only way. The half-burnt timbers swayed under his feet. Almost, he lost his foothold; but for the good dog's teeth planted firmly in his coat, he would surely have failed.

Isabel never knew how she was carried again into the blessed air of heaven. She came back from her swoon, to find Raleigh lying on the ground, stunned

and bruised, his hands scorched, his garments blackened. But not dead! God had not required that sacrifice.

The fire had thrown its light far and wide, illuminating all the wide moor, and glowing redly on the white sands along the shore. It touched the windows of the village houses with bright fingers, and called the sleeping people in eager troops across the country. But the work of the fire was finished when they came. The grey, massive walls stood grandly as ever, but within was one mass of smouldering ruin.

Old Gregory opened the doors of his cottage to his master. Looking from its humble window, Isabel saw the sun rise next morning. Bright and beautiful, its red gold slipped above the waste of waters, and shone over fen and upland, the dim old woods, and the ruins of Moorfields. She drew the curtain wide.

"I should never have seen it again, Raleigh, but for you."

The light streamed over the bed where Raleigh lay. She knelt by it, tenderly touching the senseless things about him, as though she could not pity him enough.

"You make too much of it, dear. A broken limb is nothing. I have taken more leaps than that—not with such a risk,"—and Raleigh shuddered.

"But that was taken for me."

"Well! you shall pay me for it," he said, smiling. "It will make no difference who owns Moorfields now. And the old house shall be refitted before the year has gone."

The year went by. Moorfields house is stately and beautiful; and Raleigh is its master, and Isabel is its mistress. Lion is well cared for, and receives the sweetest food, softest housing and tenderest caressings from day to day, by the gentle white hands of Isabel.

A. M. H.

THE HOUSE OF SHADOWS.

Shadows to-night

Have struck more terror to the soul of Richard

Than could the substance of ten thousand soldiers.

Shakepeare.

On the outskirts of a town, within twenty miles of Boston, still stands a stately edifice. Substantially built of the very best material, its framework has defied the ravages of time, but its general aspect is ragged and wo-begone. It may be likened to an old man of iron constitution, but decayed circumstances, who, enjoying robust health, yet shows in his external condition manifest evidence of having seen better days. There is always something human in a house which has long been the habitation of man. We cannot persuade ourselves that there is no intelligence in those windows that open like watchful eyes at early morning, and close like weary eyes when the still shadows of night descend from on high.

This old house—Fairmont it is styled—is like an aged man who has outlived all his family and friends. It exists solitary and alone, untended and neglected. The estate, of which it occupies nearly the centre, once teeming with cultivated crops, now produces nothing but grass, and except in haying-time, is an utter solitude. It is surrounded by a double row of forest trees, once ornamental, and even now the green resort of birds in summer time, but which, when stripped of their garniture of leaves, look dismal and forlorn enough; for many of them, like veterans who have survived a war, have lost their limbs, others are in a paralytic state, and here and there, there are gaps in their ranks, testifying to successful charges on their line of battle by the viewless cavalry of winter storms. They still perform, however, the duty for which they were planted, that of screening the mansion from view in the season of foliage. But the high stone wall, built for the same purpose and completely encircling the domain, has fared worse than the forest trees. It exhibits breaches at frequent intervals, and the "stones themselves to ruin grown" are covered with green and grey mosses.

The garden is a wilderness of rank weeds, in the midst of which a few pale flowers, struggling into bloom, alone give evidence of the graceful hand of culture that once groomed the gay parterres with perfumed and starry petals. A ragged hedge encloses the garden.

There was once a stone statue of a nymph and a fountain here, but the figure is now an unshapely torso, and there is only a stagnant pool, mantled with green slime, where the living waters once bubbled and sparkled in a Parian basin.

There is scarcely a whole pane of glass in all the windows of the house. Green mosses have converted the roof into a verdant thatch. The stables and outhouses are in a ruinous state, and all the wooden fences that once subdivided the property have fallen into decay.

Since it is deserted by its owner, it may be asked why some poor family has not taken possession of it,

or marauding boys and men have not hastened its destruction by removing the woodwork for fuel, and leaving the rest to the wild ravages of the autumn and winter storms. The reason is that the house is protected by its weird reputation, as a man of ill-repute is shunned and dreaded by the world.

A very poor family once attempted to occupy it, but after a week's trial relinquished the experiment, and never ventured within its portals. Even truant school-boys never trespassed on its premises, but contented themselves with halting at a distance and throwing stones at the windows. When the last pane was shattered, they ceased to frequent it; and as it stood in a disused road, it was left to utter solitude.

The vagrant wind swung to and fro its crazy shutters, the bat swept in and out its desolate chambers on its dusky wings. Even the crows, habitual symphonists of the dwelling-place of men, had learned that they might perch upon its roof tree with impunity; and they would sit there in their sable plumage, like mourners at a funeral, and croak to one another in weird melancholy notes, as if rehearsing the dismal story of the "House of Shadows,"—for that name had come to be popularly given to Fairmont, for a reason that will appear hereafter.

We have said it was utterly deserted—but strange tales were rife respecting it. It was said that the village sexton, returning home late one night from a funeral, beheld with astonishment a light in every room of Fairmont, and shadows busily passing to and fro upon the inner walls. But the light, instead of being the warm glow of a festal illumination, was the cold phosphorescent radiance of the *ignis fatuus* or will-o'-the-wisp. He repeated his story to his wife, and she to the village gossip; but the sceptical shook their heads, and hinted that the sexton had partaken too freely of the "brown October" that flowed like water at old Squire Richland's funeral, and that he had been startled by a vision of his own disordered imagination. It is noteworthy, however, that none of the unbelievers cared to pass the House of Shadows after nightfall.

The mansion was originally erected by an old colonel named Vargrave, and the property was never alienated from the Vargrave family. Godfrey Vargrave, a strange sort of man, on returning from his continental travels, during which he passed a long time at the Heidelberg University, married Eleanor Vassal, of the great Vassal family, a beauty, but no heiress. They received a great many visitors during the honeymoon, but returned few of the calls. Godfrey was a cold, reserved man, and found no pleasure except in abstruse scientific studies. He had brought home from Germany an immense number of old folios, and some priceless manuscripts bound in vellum; and fitted up a library and laboratory, in which he passed whole days, and sometimes even nights. From the chimney of the laboratory strange colored flames issued at late hours of the night, and all sorts of stories circulated as to the nature of his occupations. Some of the old men and old women of the village asserted that he was a student of the Black Art, though the minister, the schoolmaster, and the squire, laughed them to scorn, and declared that Mr. Vargrave was merely pursuing his investigations in experimental chemistry. Still Godfrey was pretty generally disliked.

He took no part in local politics, he attended to parties or pic-nics, he refused all invitations; he had money enough to live on, and he chose to spend it in his own way, without asking the advice of his neighbours, or their permission to attend to his own business. Soon, therefore, the isolation of the Vargrave became complete. This condition exactly suited Vargrave, but bore hard upon his wife, who was of a social disposition. She could have endured it better had her husband, whom she almost worshipped, devoted a portion of his time to her. But he was almost entirely immersed in his studies.

Year after year he went on, studying and toiling day and night, amassing stores of knowledge, which he never transmitted by the process of reproduction—a scientific miser, heaping up gold bullion, but never emitting it in current coin. His wife would sometimes upbraid him with this intellectual acquisitiveness and secretiveness.

"Wait," he would say on these occasions, while a strange light shone from his dark eyes, and a faint roseate flush mantled his cheeks. "One day you shall see the great result. I am on the eve of a discovery. The name of Vargrave will one day blaze in letters of light, and you shall be proud to bear it."

"I should be prouder of your love," Eleanor would answer.

"Do I not love you?" Vargrave would ask, folding her tenderly in his arms. "Do I not live for you?"

"I could not love thee, dear, so much, Loved I not science more."

At last their union was blessed by the advent of two children, twins, and boys, and thenceforth the happy mother was fully reconciled to her lot. The children

thrived and grew apace. They were exactly alike in features and in form, marvels of grace and beauty. Eleanor fondly hoped to see them attain the age of manhood, and become her companions and support. But these hopes were never realized. A few happy years passed by, and then death came to her in the guise he so often assumes—consumption. Her decline was rapid. A few months after the disease first declared itself, she was laid to rest in the little green churchyard of the village.

Vargrave was stricken to the heart by this calamity. For a few weeks it seemed as if he, too, had received his death-blow, but he looked upon his children, and he resolved to live for their sakes. Thenceforth his old studies were abandoned. The laboratory was dismantled—the retorts and crucibles were consigned to the rubbish heap. He resolved to educate his children himself. He had peculiar views of education, but they were rational and enlightened. He taught them much only, and he devoted as much time to their physical as to their intellectual development. He encouraged them to acquire dexterity in every manly exercise—marksmanship, horsemanship, rowing, swimming, running, leaping; to harden their muscles, to despise luxury, to court fatigue, to endure hardship. They were thus fitted, when the time came, to pursue a course of severe study without exhaustion. They were then initiated into the classic and modern languages, mathematics, the sciences, drawing, music. In a word, he made them accomplished young men, cultivating at the same time their moral qualities. To be frank, brave, truthful, sincere Christian gentlemen, was the aim of his whole course of instruction.

Clarence and Walter Vargrave grew to be fine young men. They were so alike, physically, that strangers found it difficult to tell them apart. Their tastes, however, differed somewhat. Though educated in the same manner, Clarence cared far more for field sports than he did for books; while Walter only valued the former as it supplied him with needful exercise, and was passionately fond of study. That they were both destined to distinction, though in different lines, their father never doubted. But he never failed to realize his anticipations. A typhus fever carried him off when the young men had reached the prime of age of twenty-two.

After a season of deep mourning, the brothers amused themselves, and each betook him to his favorite routine of occupation—Walter to his books, Clarence to his horse and gun. A distant relative, an old widowed lady, by the name of Otis, took charge of the household affairs.

The young men began to go a little into company. The Munsons, a neighbouring family, showed them some attentions, which were cordially received, and sometimes accepted their hospitalities.

We must here notice that Clarence, of a gay and lively nature, shone brilliantly in society, while the native shyness of Walter deepened as he grew older and fonder of quiet study. He never went into company without his brother, on whom he relied for encouragement and countenance.

Caroline Munson, a refined and beautiful girl, soon attracted the attention of Clarence Vargrave. He had lived such a solitary life, that he was ready to fall desperately in love with the first pretty girl that came in his way, and it was fortunate that the first who came was a prize. He soon imparted the state of his feelings to Walter, who could not find it in his heart to discourage him. From that moment he spent most of his time in the society of Caroline, while Walter devoted himself to his book more assiduously than ever. Still Clarence would often force his brother to accompany him to the Munsons, or to mount his horse when he and the young lady had made up their minds to an equestrian excursion.

The lovers, in the innocence of their hearts, were perfectly unconstrained in their actions and conversation before this living witness whose presence effectually checked the idle gossip of the village. It was obvious enough to all that they loved each other, and yet, after many weeks, Clarence confessed to his brother that he had never formally asked Caroline to be his. He laughingly said he wanted courage, sometimes that he loved to prolong the delicious period of courtship. There was, however, no obstacle to their happiness, and they seemed destined to unite their fortunes.

No obstacle? Alas! who in this sad world can foresee the events a day or an hour may bring forth? The brothers went out one day shooting. One alone returned to Fairmont—a wild, frantic, heart-crushed man. How he managed to tell his story to the housekeeper, seems incredible. But soon after his return his man came to Fairmont, bearing on a litter the lifeless body of Clarence Vargrave—the dark red blood congealed on a terrible wound in the head.

The particulars of the tragedy were commonplace, and briefly told. The brothers were pursuing a narrow woodland path, Clarence being in the advance, Walter following. A twig caught the trigger of

Walter's gun, which was discharged, its contents lodging in his brother's head, and killing him instantly.

What followed, what happened in many dreary weeks, the broken-hearted survivor could never distinctly recall, or rather the scenes seemed like the weird, phantom occurrences of a distempered dream—the coroner's inquest, the frantic parting with the dead, the funeral, the return to the desolate home, to the bed they had shared from infancy, and on which a brain fever chained the hapless Walter for a long, long time.

In the delirium of that fever he would pray to be taken to the churchyard and laid beside his dear Clarence. At other times, for hours, he would withstand the pleadings of Mrs. Otis, his devoted nurse, to take the potions left by the physician. He did not wish to live. That he did live was a marvel. There seemed to have been but one heart in common to the twins. Could half that heart be in the grave, and the other beat with healthful vivacity?

But Walter did live, and rose from the bed a shadow of his former self. But, oh, how spiritually beautiful was his wan face! He would sit hours by the fountain, sad and dreamy, listening to the splash of its musical waters, his memory travelling back to scenes that would never more be re-enacted on this earthly stage. At other times he would fly from the sunshine as from an accursed thing. He would immerse himself in darkness. His bedroom was sedulously darkened. He rarely lit a lamp, and when the moon shone bright he would close all his shutters.

It was a long time before he could summon courage to see Caroline. The first interview was dreadful, but the poor girl showed the greater courage of the two. The visit, however, was repeated, and the intimacy renewed. To Caroline it was more consoling than to Walter, for in him she perceived the living image of the lost. As time wore on, they became almost inseparable, and it now seemed possible that both might attain a quiet happiness, though the shadows of the past would always be projected on their pathway. Providence rarely inflicts intolerable misery. With the weight of the burthen is accorded the power to sustain it.

It was finally settled that Walter Vargrave should marry Caroline Munson. It seemed a fitting union. The memory of the lost was enshrined in both their hearts, and drew them closer together. In spite, however, of many a love-lit hour, Walter had his black fits of despondency.

It was during one of these moods that Dr. Stanwood, the physician who had rescued him from the jaws of death, had called to see him, not professionally, but as a friend.

"I called to see you, my dear fellow," said the doctor, "but I can't see you if you keep your room in perfect darkness."

"It is a whim of mine," answered Walter, moodily. "Then I must cure that unhealthy whim by a prescription," answered the doctor. "I must have a light."

"If you insist upon it," said Walter.

"I do insist upon it."

Walter lighted a match, and a large lamp was soon burning on the study table.

"Don't you feel as well as usual?" asked the doctor, scrutinizing Walter closely.

"Yes—as well as I usually do—at night," answered Walter.

"At night? You emphasize the word."

"I do intentionally."

His eyes were fixed as he spoke, not on the doctor, but on the wall of the apartment, with a strange, wild, haggard expression.

"What do you see there to interest you so?" asked the doctor.

"Shadows—shadows—doctor," muttered Vargrave.

"Shadows—of course," said the doctor. "Where there is light and substance, there must be shadow."

"But where there is no substance?" asked Walter.

"Then there will be no shadow, of course," answered the doctor.

"There's where you're mistaken, doctor, in spite of all your science."

"Pooh! pooh!"

"How many shadows are there on yonder wall?" asked Walter, pointing to it with a trembling finger.

"Two—yours and mine," answered the doctor.

"Three!" almost shrieked Walter. "Yours—mine—and his!"

"His—whose?"

"Whose but Clarence's?" he answered, with a shudder.

"My dear boy," said the doctor, "dismiss this strange delusion—for it is only a delusion."

"Doctor," said Walter, solemnly, "I tell you it is no delusion. I tell you I am haunted by shadows—this is the House of Shadows. It is in this way my brother manifests his presence. In the garden, by the fountain, when the sun is shining brightly, two

shadows are projected on the gravel-walk, mine and his. When the moon shines in at this window, my shadow and his are delineated on the floor. When the lamps are lit, my shadow and his are projected on the wall. Therefore I no longer sit in the sunshine by the fountain—therefore I close the shutters when the moon shines—therefore I sit in the darkness when the sun has gone down."

"My dear Vargrave," said the doctor, "let me assure you that this is only a delusion, which you must combat by the exercise of your own good sense. You had better leave these scenes for the present—marry at once, and travel. Your imagination is getting the better of you."

"Unfortunately," answered Vargrave, "this strange matter is susceptible of demonstration."

"Well, I am open to conviction," answered the doctor, willing to humour the disordered fancy of his friend.

"You know," pursued Vargrave, in a tone of calmness that surprised the doctor, "that my poor father took the utmost pains to teach me drawing, in which he excelled himself, but that I could never learn to draw the simplest objects?"

"Admitted," said the doctor. "What next?"

"I will show you," replied Vargrave. "I am going to make a demonstration."

He took up a porte-crayon which held a pointed piece of charcoal, from the table, and walking up to the wall, rapidly traced the outline of a face and figure in profile a little larger than life.

"Look there!" he said, as he stepped back from the wall.

The physician was petrified. There, on the wall, was the image of Clarence Vargrave, the pure outline of his classical face, the contour of his graceful and manly figure, perfect in every line and detail.

"Is it not demonstrated?" asked Walter, as he swept a cloth over the figure, and obliterated every vestige of his work.

"I do not know what to say," said the doctor.

"Say nothing at all," answered Walter, in a hollow voice. "We are here in a spiritual presence. Away from this house I breathe free; but here, I am, as you have seen to-night, a haunted man."

"You have given me material for deep thought," said the doctor as he rose to go; "but in the meantime let me urge you to adopt my advice. Get married as soon as you can, and travel. It is not well to live as you do in such an atmosphere as this."

Walter Vargrave adopted the advice of his friend. The preparations for the marriage and for an immediate journey were hastened, and finally, on a bright autumnal day, Vargrave led his bride to the altar. Only a few friends were present in the little church which wore a bright aspect, for the sunlight streamed in at the windows and filled the building with its radiance.

When the clergyman came to that part of the ceremony where he commands any one knowing any impediment to the marriage, to speak then or for ever hold his peace, the bridegroom suddenly dropped the hand of his bride.

"Hold!" he exclaimed, in a voice that thrilled through the nerves of every auditor. "Do you not hear him? He forbids the nuptials."

"Who?" cried the startled clergyman.

"My brother—Clarence Vargrave!" cried the bridegroom. "Do not stare at me in that way—I am not mad. I tell you Clarence Vargrave is here, to forbid my hand polluting that of his bride. He is here. You do not see him, but I behold his shadow—there, rising from the floor to the ceiling, within the altar—a dark and menacing shadow, but darkest where it hides the tables of the ten commandments, wherein murder is forbidden. Yes—murder! I, another Cain, slew my brother in cold blood. Why did I slay him, do ye ask? That I might stand here to-day where he should have stood—that I might possess the woman that we loved—Clarence and I—but I more madly, more devotedly than he did."

He ceased, and remained with outstretched finger pointing to the wall, his teeth clenched, his eyes starting from their sockets, his hair bristling with terror.

Words cannot describe the scene that ensued. Caroline was taken from the altar fainting. A crowd gathered about Walter, among whom there was some distrust and horror, but more pity manifested. At last he grew calmer, the strange excitement vanished from his face, and he assumed his ordinary manner.

Dr. Stanwood, who was present, offered him his hand. Vargrave declined it, and said:

"Gentlemen, I wish, now that my emotion has subsided, to repeat the confession extorted from my lips by a phenomenon which I cannot explain. I did commit the crime I have just avowed, and I am anxious now only to do what remains for me to do—to surrender myself into the hands of justice. I am perfectly sane—as much so as any of you—more master of myself, as I perceive by the expression of your faces."

After much hesitation, the unhappy man was taken into custody. But on the evidence of Dr. Stanwood, he was committed to a lunatic asylum. Here his conduct was quiet and his conversation rational. Dr. Stanwood visited him frequently, and he talked very freely with his former friend. He said that he was no longer haunted by the shadow of his brother. The supernatural appearances which had tortured him at Fairmont, having accomplished the object of their mission in extorting a confession of his guilt, he was now mercifully spared the horror of their repetition. Death, he said, was preferable to the life he had led after the commission of his awful crime. He loved his brother devotedly, but the love of woman was stronger than fraternal love. His was the passion

"That doles but dooms, and murders yet adores."

But from the moment of the fatal shot, agony and remorse had taken possession of his soul. Yet guilty love revived when he saw Caroline again, and, as it had first driven him to murder, so now it over rode remorse.

His case was the strangest that had ever perplexed judicial and medical science. The most learned physicians in the land examined him and consulted together on his mental status. He appeared rational and consistent, but he persisted in his theory of the haunting shadows, and as spiritualism then, no more than now, was admitted to influence the decrees of science, Walter Vargrave was solemnly pronounced mad, and never left the walls of the lunatic asylum. There he pined away and died, leaving the question of his guilt or innocence, sanity or insanity, undecided—a mystery as we have termed this tragic story.

Caroline, the loved of the two brothers, did not long survive the death of both. Her remains and theirs lie near each other in the quiet village churchyard. The family of Vargrave is extinct, and in the home they reared dwelt desolation, solitude and terror—it is indeed the House of Shadows. F. D. A.

THE PREDICTION.

FLORA possessed charms that the loftiest queen might prize. No one could look at her without thinking of all that is most sweet and lovely in the material and spiritual world—without feeling all the poetry, all the music of their spirits awake and stirring within them. The soft whiteness of the pearl was diffused over her forehead and neck, the beautiful carmine of the sea-shell was mellowed in her cheek, the sunbeams sported in her golden hair, and the stars of evening shone from the sapphire of her eyes.

This is no exaggerated description. She was one of those rare miracles of beauty which sometimes appear to show of what exquisite loveliness the human form is capable. This rare gift of beauty, her sweet and amiable disposition and unequalled elegance, made her the loved and admired of all.

Her mother died long ago, leaving her to the care of a dotting father. Upon the father thus fell the duty of the guardian and the labours of a teacher, which is the sole object and end of parental life. Thus she had grown and lived the idol of her father's heart, with every wish gratified, and every accomplishment that could add one charm to those nature had so lavishly bestowed upon her at her disposal. And she, in return, repaid his kindness by ministering to his wants, striving to smooth his rugged pathway, and contribute happiness to him in his declining years.

He was not bountifully blessed with this world's goods, but was famed through many lands as a learned man and prophet.

Young Charles was a wealthy and powerful prince. In his youth he chanced to meet Flora. He was fascinated by her unrivalled beauty, graceful form, and the sweetness of her disposition. With all the ardour of youthful love, he forgot the vast difference in their wealth and social position, and pledged his love to her.

Years rolled by, and the young prince increased in wealth and power. A wealthy nobleman came to that place. He had a daughter about the age of Flora, but inferior to her both in person and education.

Charles had become exceedingly proud. His youthful promise was forgotten, and he chose the nobleman's daughter for his bride. When Flora heard of his unfaithfulness she ceased to smile. The rose on her cheek faded, and her reason departed.

Then the old prophet said to Charles:

"Woe to thee, proud prince! for, on thy bridal morn, a prince more powerful than thou art shall bear away thy bride!"

A laugh of scorn was the response to the threat of the old prophet, and the young prince surveyed his strong towers, his many slaves, and his own manly form, for he was very strong and bold, and exclaimed: "Welcome the bold prince who shall attempt to rob me of my bride!"

The morning sun was shining in dazzling splendour on turret, dome, and tower, as the glittering throng

wended their way to the chapel, for it was the bridal morn.

Prince Charles has marshalled his bands, and his banners are floating upon the breeze. All are gay, joyous, and happy, for never before did the oldest inhabitants see such splendour.

As the prince in all his pride and glory passes the prophet, he says:

"Where now is the strong prince who shall carry away my bride?"

They pass on to the chapel, and are now stationed at the altar—the bride and her glittering train, the haughty prince, and the minister in his solemn garb.

But hark to those sounds that come to the ear like the roll of distant thunder! Flashes of lightning are seen darting through the air—the earth trembles as if shaken to its very foundation, and the pillars of the temple are rent in twain. All fly in frenzy; many trample over the bodies of their friends to escape, only to be swallowed by the gaping earth.

The prince seized his beautiful bride, and passed in safety the outer gate, and boastingly said:

"I will save her even from the jaws of death!"

After he had escaped the dangers of the opening earth and falling towers, he stopped to look at the face of his bride; but only gazed upon the face of the dead, for amidst the terrors of that dreadful hour her frail life had flown.

Then the proud prince remembered the words of the prophet, for Death was the bold prince who had the power to rob him of his bride. C. B. A.

THE PRIESTESS OF THE SUN.

A TALE OF PERU.

CHAPTER I.

THE ice-crowned summits of the Andes were gleaming and glistening in the rays of the setting sun, as a single horseman rode slowly along one of the roads of Peru. It was a road whose massiveness of construction, and excellence of formation, excited the wonder of the beholder as much as any of the works of the Incas. Now it wound with serpentine turnings up the almost precipitous side of some lofty height, and again it descended, by the same intricate turnings, round many a projecting cliff into some deep gully. Passing over the gully by a slender, yet strong bridge, it again went on as before.

Along this road went the horseman. He was a Spaniard, and his dress consisted of the heavy armour of the Spanish adventurers under Pizarro. A breast-plate of gleaming steel protected his body. A strong helmet was on his head. A carbine was slung over his shoulders, and a heavy sword hung down from his side. His form was tall, and well knit together, and his face, though bronzed by exposure and hardship, was noble and lofty in its expression.

"By San Jago!" he muttered, as he drew up his steed before a slender bridge which crossed a deep gully, "this is a road such as is seldom found. A wonderful people are these Indians! Come, get up, good horse! What, you are afraid? Now, then!"

And spurring his horse, he went boldly and quickly across. The bridge swayed and crackled beneath him, and scarcely had he touched the other side when it fell.

"A narrow escape," he cried, looking back. "Pizarro did wisely in sending but one man on this expedition to Quito. But what a country! The people are all hidden, the villages empty, the fields untilled."

He looked around him. Far beneath, the fertile plains of this once peaceful region spread before him. Countless trees, and shady groves, and running rivers, threw indescribable charms around the landscape. The mountains rose up like guardians, cultivated in many places by terraces far up their sides. But no people could be seen. The villages, the immense royal granaries, the roads and fields, all were empty.

"I would not wonder—no, by the Virgin, I would not—if these mountain recesses were full of them," said the Spaniard. "Yonder projecting rock—Ha!"

He uttered an exclamation of surprise, as looking forward toward a place where the road turned round a lofty cliff, he saw a crowd of men running up toward the summit.

"By San Christoforo!" he cried, "the villains will stop me. They will throw rocks down upon me."

He reined in his steed, and stopped to consider. He delayed but for a moment.

"I must on," he cried. "Never shall it be said that Don Alberto de Reggio feared a foe! A Christian can overcome a hundred heathen Indians. Then Regio y Dios! Hurrah!"

Shouting his battle cry, and holding his head erect, he spurred his horse and rode like the wind down the

road. He neared the rock. A wild cry came from the summit. Loose rocks fell before him.

"Reggio y Dios!" he shouted.

He rushed like the wind round the rock. A hundred massive fragments of stone fell crashing down. They poured down like hail, but Reggio was beyond their reach. The rocks fell upon the road behind him. Some rested, others bounded on, and descended thundering down the declivities, awaking the echoes in the deep recesses of the gorges which lay around.

On rode Reggio.

The Peruvians uttered a louder cry. A shout of disappointment, mingled with vengeance. The sound struck coldly upon the Spaniard's ear.

"They have something worse in store for me," he muttered, as turning his head, he beheld them descending into the road behind him.

The road ascended before him, and then with a sharp turn descended steeply into a valley. He drew up his horse suddenly as he stood upon the top of the eminence, and the reins dropped from his hands.

In the valley before him was a crowd of men dressed in the cotton armour of the Peruvians, with their sharp spears and steel-pointed maces glittering in the last rays of the sun, toward which all knelt in adoration. Hoary priests moved among them, and virgins dressed in white stood around an altar. As the sun sank, a loud cry ascended. But a louder, a wilder, a more fearful shout arose, as they saw Reggio, and recognised one of their hated persecutors!

"The invaders! Vengeance!"

The cry came up from all.

Terror first seized upon many, for they knew not the number which might be behind the single horseman.

"Courage!" cried a venerable priest. "Fight for your country. Though there be a hundred, you can surely withstand them, for thousands of warriors are here."

Reggio looked—he saw the dark body of warriors closing upon him, with their level spears, their upraised weapons. A shower of arrows flew toward him, but fell harmlessly from his strong breastplate.

"There is no hope. I must on!"

He spoke with desperate energy. He took his gun, and, giving spurs to his horse, rode down into the midst of his enemies.

Again his battle cry arose. His fierce charger rushed among the Indians—the thunder of the Spaniard's gun struck deadly fear upon their hearts. But they closed in all around him, and arrows from afar struck his arms, and hundreds of blows fell upon him. With his heavy sword the Spaniard struggled bravely against the fearful odds. Now terrified at his strength and prowess, they retreated for a little space, and again gathering courage, they sprang forward. They leaped upon the horse, they seized his legs, they fell beneath him, and were trampled down while they held the reins in a frenzied, deathly grasp. The horse, held back by so many, stood still. Reggio, wounded and weary, could not struggle much longer. A huge warrior leaped up behind him, and wound his strong arms round Reggio's neck. A score of others seized him, and pulled him to the ground.

"Yield!" cried an old priest to him. "Yield, fool, or die—"

"I will not!" cried Reggio, in Peruvian; and he sought to free himself. But strong men held him down—his sword was wrenched from his grasp—his horse was led away—he was lost! They bound his arms tightly behind him, and then four strong warriors took him upon their shoulders and bore him away.

"To the sacrifice! the sacrifice, at to-morrow's dawn!" exclaimed a hundred voices.

CHAPTER II.

REGGIO lay bound in the room of a strong house whose walls of massive stone presented a barrier through which he might never escape. He lay upon his back fastened to the floor. The wind from afar blew through a small aperture, and gently fanned his heated brow.

"A sacrifice! I—a sacrifice? Deliver me! Oh, deliver me!" he cried.

He groaned, and sought to calm himself, but no efforts could detach his thoughts from the fearful doom which awaited him on the morrow. Suddenly a voice spoke close beside him. He turned, and a tall form, dressed in complete white, stood near. At first a shadow of superstitious terror passed through him, as he saw the white robes fluttering in the breeze, and he feared that he had evoked a spirit.

"Christian," said the figure, in Peruvian.

"Who speaks?" answered Reggio, boldly.

"A friend."

"Then you must have come from the dead, for all who love me are there."

"I am alive."

"A Peruvian? a friend? No, no."

"I am all that I have said, and have come to save you."

"'Tis the voice of a maiden!" murmured Reggio. "I have heard that voice before. Oh, tell me, who are you?"

"Waste no words. I am a friend. I come to save you from death."

She stooped down, and with a sharp knife severed his painful bonds. The Spaniard arose to his feet. The figure before him was enveloped in white, and but a small part of her face was visible. Reggio looked at her, and fell upon his knees before her.

"Rise! rise!" she said, impatiently. "Think only of safety. Follow me."

And she glided from the room without noise; a small light which she held in her hand, guided him for a distance as he softly followed after her. She stopped at length, and put a string in his hand, one end of which she held herself. Then extinguishing the light, she left it upon the floor, and walked on. Reggio followed. They went through wide rooms and long halls, through narrow passages, and labyrinthine galleries, until at last the freshness of the air told Reggio that he approached the outside. She drew back some heavy bolts that slipped noiselessly to her touch, and opened the ponderous door.

Reggio repressed an exclamation of joy. Looking out, he saw his horse standing there with muffled feet, ready to bear him away in silence. A gun and a sword lay there also.

"Beautiful being! How can I ever repay my debt of gratitude to you?" cried Reggio in a transport.

"'Tis my debt. I repay it. Haste. No more words."

"I will not go without you," he cried, passionately. "Come, oh, come with me!"

The maiden stood still.

"Oh, come!" he cried, imploringly. "You will not leave me to stay—"

"No," she said, tenderly. "You can go without me."

"Never!" he cried. He took her in his arms. She did not resist. In a few moments both were seated on the powerful horse. A few cheering words, a light stroke, and the horse and his riders were gone. They went slowly until out of hearing. Then Reggio dismounted and took off the cumbersome foot coverings.

"Ha!" he cried, "what noise is that?"

"They have discovered it. Up, or you are lost!" cried the maiden. "Up!"

Reggio sprang upon the horse. Far behind him sounded a deep murmur, as though many voices were crying together.

"Oh, were some of my brave comrades near!"

"Think not of that—think not of that. Fly!"

"Hold me tightly," he cried, as his horse fled swiftly along the road. "Hold fast!" His strong arm was around her. She clung closely to him, and away they went far from their enemies. When the sun arose, danger was far away. The two travellers paused upon the summit of a gentle ascent which overlooked a small town. There the ensign of Spain fluttered from a huge building which appeared to be used as a barracks.

"Let me down here," said the maiden, to Reggio.

"I must descend."

Reggio dismounted, and took her to a rock, upon which she sat.

"Christian, we must part here."

"What!" cried Reggio, with a start.

"We must part—"

"Never! never shall you leave me."

"Christian, you must not detain me. Would it be fit for him whom I have delivered, to keep me a prisoner?"

"Not a prisoner. Oh, no! but something dearer," cried Reggio, passionately. "But, who are you? I have heard your voice before."

"Yes. At Caxamalca—"

"What?" cried Reggio, starting—

"Do you not remember when the perfidious invader came to Caxamalca? Our Inca thought not of deceiving them. He treated them as a great king should. Do you not remember how his hospitality was returned? Thousands of the dead could tell. The ghost of a murdered Inca, if it could speak from its grave, and tell."

Reggio was silent.

"Oh, what a scene of terror there was," said his companion, "when the invader armed with thunder, rushed on their unarmed and unsuspecting hosts. The guest murdered his entertainer—those whom we had treated with hospitality became our murderers."

Reggio sighed deeply.

"Yet you were not among them. You, I know, abhorred the deed. There was a maiden there—a

maiden of the royal blood—her name was Alanola. When the fierce Spaniards came out upon their victims, she fled in terror across the plain. Her white robes fluttered in the breeze, and after the slaughter, the Spaniards pursuing those who fled, beheld her also. They came towards her on their fierce demons of beasts. She fell, overcome with terror. Then—ah, then! there was a generous heart found—a soul who pitied her, who saved her from dishonour and torture. You are he—"

Reggio started up, and looked earnestly at her. But the face of his companion was concealed behind her veil.

"Who are you? How did you hear this?"

"I never heard it. I saw it. Look at me."

The veil fell from her head, and the maiden stood up before him. And never, even among the beauties of his own native land, had Reggio beheld such loveliness. Her eyes were black and lustrous. Her hair was black as night, and golden jewels gleamed among her luxurious locks like stars.

"Alanola!" cried the Spaniard. "O heavens, am I thus repaid—?"

"You saved my life, and I saved yours—"

Reggio caught her in his arms.

"This is the last time that we can look on one another," she said, mournfully.

"No, no," cried Reggio. "Why will you speak thus? You have fled with me. With me you must stay."

"I cannot."

"And why?"

"I am the Priestess of the Sun. I tend the ever-burning fire. I have sinned in letting you behold my face, or touch me."

Reggio seemed struck dumb.

"Farewell, then," she said.

"You must not go! Where will you go?"

"To Cuzco—to the holy temple."

"There is no holy temple now. There is no Cuzco. 'Tis taken by us. Your temple is overthrown."

"Then all is over!"

"You cannot go anywhere now—"

"Alas, no, except to the grave."

"No, no, Alanola. Come with me, and find a home in my heart. Though your false god has forsaken you, I will not!" and he took her unresisting hand.

"Your god is powerless. Come with me, and learn the true worship."

Tears stood in her eyes.

Reggio again lifted her upon his horse. She all unresisting, suffered him. And putting spurs to his noble charger, Reggio and his lovely burden arrived shortly after in the town of Caltupa.

For a year longer Peru though conquered, was tumultuous. Manco, the new Inca, spread terror among the mountains, and Reggio was employed in subduing him. Alanola was placed in safety by him. But after the year was up he left the mountains, and brought the lovely priestess to Lima. There in the palace of the viceroy Pizarro, which rose proudly among the mansions of the new city, Reggio saw the Priestess of the Sun baptized in the private chapel, and on the same evening he was united by Las Casas to his lovely bride and royal princess, the Priestess of the Sun.

J. D. M.

THE STREETS OF POMPEII.

The streets are, for the most part, straight, and run at right angles to one another; they are not wide, many of them not admitting of the passage of more than one chariot at a time, and probably these were not much used, taking into account the small extent of the city (only three-quarters of a mile in length, and half a mile in width), though the deeply-worn ruts in the stones would seem to indicate the contrary.

The roadway is composed of huge polygonal masses of lava, from nine to eighteen inches in diameter, and nine inches in depth, closely fitted together; the stones were worked in a wedge shape, so that they spanned the roadway like a vault, each stone resembling the vauvour of an arch.

All the streets have pavements for foot passengers, even those where chariots could not pass, consisting of curb stones of lava, with the pavement composed of bits of marble and stone set in cement, the whole rubbed flat; in places where the curb stones have broken away they have been cramped together with iron.

These foot pavements are elevated, sometimes more than a foot above the roadway; it is supposed that the latter, in times of rain (which falls very heavily in these countries), become a kind of sewer, as all the streets are slightly inclined one way or the other; and this supposition seems well founded, because there exist everywhere huge stepping stones

from pavement to pavement, the wheels of the carriages, and horses (always two), passing on either side of the stone.

The way in which the solid refuse of the city was carried away is still a mystery, scarcely any traces of sewers having been found.

Mazois gives us a drawing of one, the position of which he does not state; but it seems only to have served to carry the waters from the street under the walls to outside the town. It is just possible that the streets may have been the only sewers, as they are still in some towns in the east. Though traces of aqueducts are found in the country around, it is not known with any great certainty from whence Pompeii was so plentifully supplied with water, there being no wells.

A very large number of leaden and earthenware pipes have been found, the former of which supplied the numerous fountains which were placed in all the principal streets. They consisted of a cistern formed of blocks of lava, cramped together with iron, the water falling into them through a pipe fixed in one of the back stones of the cistern, which rises higher than the rest.

CRUSOE'S ISLAND.

UNDER this title there has been just published a very interesting volume of travels by J. R. Browne, author of "Etchings of a Whaling Cruise." Mr. Browne visited the island in which Alexander Selkirk spent so many lonely days, and which the genius of De Foe in Robinson Crusoe has made so dear to us all.

The author gives us a very curious account of the state of the island, and of the traces of Robinson Crusoe—or, more properly speaking, of Alexander Selkirk—which were even then to be found in many parts. The very cave, according to Mr. Browne, may be seen, with actual evidences of its having been the dwelling-place of the lonely, shipwrecked Scotchman. Of this interesting spot we read:—

"It lies in a volcanic mass of rock, forming the bluff or termination of a rugged ridge, and looks as if it might be the doorway into the ruins of some grand old castle."

"The height of the entrance is about fifteen feet, and the distance back into the extremity twenty-five or thirty. It varies in width from ten or twelve to eighteen feet."

"Within the mouth the surface is of reddish rock, with holes or pockets dug into the sides, which it is probable were used for cupboards by the original occupant."

"There were likewise spike-nails driven into the rock, upon which we thought it likely clothing, guns, and household utensils might have been hung even at so remote a date as the time of Selkirk, for they were very rusty, and bore evidence of having been driven into the rock a long time ago."

"A sort of stone oven, with a sunken place for fire underneath, was partly visible in the back part of the cave, so that by digging away the earth we uncovered it, and made out the purpose for which it was built. There was a darkish line, about a foot wide, reaching up to the roof of the cave, which, by removing the surface a little, we discovered to be produced originally by smoke, cemented in some sort by a drip that still moistened the wall, and this we found came through a hole in the top, which we concluded was the original chimney, now covered over with deposits of earth and leaves from the mountain above."

"In rooting about the fireplace, so as to get away the loose rubbish that lay over it, one of our party brought to light an earthen vessel, broken a little on one side, but otherwise perfect. It was about eight inches in diameter at the rim, and an inch or two smaller at the bottom, and had some rough marks upon the outside, which we were unable to decipher, on account of the clay which covered it. Afterwards we took it out and washed it in a spring near by, when we contrived to decipher one letter and a part of another, with a portion of the date. The rest unfortunately was on the piece which had been broken off, and which we were unable to find, although we searched a long time; for, as may be supposed, we felt curious to know if it was the handiwork of Alexander Selkirk."

"For my own part, I had but little doubt that this was really one of the earthen pots made by his own hands, and the reason I thought so was that the parts of the letters and date which we deciphered corresponded with his name and the date of his residence, and likewise because it was evident that it must have been imbedded in the ground out of which we dug it long beyond the memory of any living man."

"I was so convinced of this, and so interested in the discovery, that I made a rough drawing of it on the spot, of which I have since been very glad, inasmuch as it was accidentally dropped out of the boat afterwards and lost in the sea."

"We searched in vain for other relics of the kind."

but all we could find were a few rusty pieces of iron and some old nails.

"The sides of the cave, as also the top, had marks scattered over them of different kinds, doubtless made there in some idle moment by human hands; but we were unable to make out that any of them had a meaning beyond the unconscious expression of those vague and wandering thoughts which must have passed occasionally through the mind of the solitary mariner who dwelt in this lonely place."

A FOX OUTWITTING HIS ENEMIES.

A LITTER of cubs having been laid up in the bank of a covert, rigorously preserved, it was decided by those in authority that prompt measures should be adopted to prevent the possibility of mischief being committed. The instructions given to the head-keeper, were, "Kill them, mother and all."

Pickaxe and spade were speedily set to work, and from among the dry sand and gravel two brace of strong and healthy cubs were taken, and three ruthlessly despatched on the spot. The one saved temporarily was designed as the means of luring the mother to destruction. A piece of cord was attached to its neck, the little victim was placed on the stump of a tree, which had been felled close at hand, and so fixed to a nail in the centre that he could struggle round the butt without falling off. The moon being bright and clear, the keeper took his place in a hut which had frequently afforded warmth and protection in his lonely watch and ward, and which also commanded a clear view of the unhappy cub upon the elevated and natural platform. Gun in hand, and with dire intent, he waited for the coming of the vixen, knowing full well that her advent would not be long protracted.

It so happened, however, that before the time arrived for her approaching within range of the deadly charge, the keeper's eyelids were closed, and his "senses steeped in forgetfulness." How long he slept is not recorded, but, upon awaking, the moon was down, and the night dark and murky. Angry with himself at having missed the opportunity, to use his own words, "he had made up his mind to knock the cub on the head and set traps for the vixen." But this design was foiled.

Upon proceeding to the stump of the old tree, he discovered nothing upon it but part of the cord; and on the ground lay a fresh-killed rabbit, a rat, a carrion crow, much decomposed, two rooks recently disinterred, and a kitten, which bore every appearance of having been drowned and buried. The affectionate mother had brought from her stores the provisions described for her little ones, without knowing, perhaps, while engaged in the labour, that all were murdered but the captive bound to the butt of the tree.

Be this as it may, for it can only be conjecture, she learned, before the lesson was valueless, that he was a prisoner, and, applying her sharp teeth, she severed the cord, and gave him both liberty and life, bearing her last pet away tenderly in her mouth, as she must have done, from the scene of death and danger.

BARBAROUS.—The Mexican ladies adorn their heads by impaling the cucujo or lightning-bug on a pin, and sticking it in their hair. The insect gives a more powerful light than the firefly or the glowworm, and the effect of the mode is to make the ladies of Mexico appear decidedly light-headed.

SEA-SICKNESS.—Most writers on sea-sickness consider this affection to be due to hyperæmia of the brain and spinal cord, or to a morbid condition of the gastric nerves. Sea-sickness is, in reality, caused by anæmia of the brain and the cervical portion of the spinal cord, arising from insufficient power of the heart, and whereby a general increase of reflex excitability throughout the system is brought about. The first and most constant symptom of the disorder is not retching or vomiting, but vertigo, which is most severe in the standing posture, and at once relieved by a strictly horizontal position, and which is thus proved to arise from a deficient amount of blood in the nervous centres. The increase of reflex excitability is also shown by greater sensitiveness of the patient to light, sound, touch, &c.; and in some cases there are even reflected spasms in the lower extremities. It is, however, greatest in the stomach, as evidenced by retching and vomiting, the degree of which is independent upon the posture of the patient, but not upon the full or empty condition of the stomach, or its greater or less vital power. This increase of excitability is, after a time, generally followed by a considerable diminution of it, there being great torpor and profound indifference. The organ primarily disturbed, therefore, appears to be the heart, which, in consequence of the ship's motions, becomes unable to propel the blood with sufficient power into the

nervous centres. Persons with a strong heart and a slow pulse generally suffer little from sea-sickness; while irritable people, with a quick pulse and a tendency to palpitations, are more liable to be affected. This explains, to a certain extent, the different liability to sea-sickness of the different nations; for, as a rule, the French and Italians, being of a more irritable temper suffer most, the Germans less, and the English least of the disorder.

MR. HALE, the "great" bookmaker, has been in Paris, and astonished the natives. He is about seven feet six inches high, and can look down on the most splendid specimen of a drum-major in the army of France. National feeling is aroused and indignant.

THE first brick of the tunnel intended to pass under Hampstead, and to form a portion of the Midland extension line into London, has been laid. The tunnel will be 1,800 yards long, and in one part is thirty yards below the surface.

THE SWORD MAKER OF TOLEDO,

CHAPTER XIII.

The enemy and the oppressor's eye hath been

Upon our heritage. I sit to-night

Under an exile's tent, but not serene,

Nor with the faces best beloved in sight:

To-morrow eve may find me chained—and thee—

How can I bear to think what thou mayst be!

Mrs. Hemans.

As the little party of fugitives rode away from Toledo, Syria's grief at parting from her lover almost swallowed up her joy at being reunited with her father, but the gentle attentions and loving care of Ben Israel soon caused her to resolutely set aside her grief and exert herself to comfort him.

She remembered that he too was leaving the land he loved, whither he had wooed, and won, and buried his wife, the land that was hallowed by her tomb, as well as by the joys and sorrows of a life-time.

They paused when they were fairly beyond the city, and Ben Israel said, in a choking voice, as he regarded the familiar domes and spires:

"Farewell, Toledo, home of my heart! I shall never see you again! One last look, and then farewell for ever."

The last look was given, each member of the party taking in the picture of the fair city as it lay in the moonlight, with the shining Tagus flowing on three sides of it, and enclosed in the double wall that was shutting them out from it for ever, and then they turned their faces to the east, setting out for the nearest seaport—that of Valencia.

They rode on all night in the star-light, recalling tender recollections of their late homes, and gradually turning their thoughts towards the future, and their destination.

Syria feigned cheerfulness, and pictured to her father the pretty home they would have in a more hospitable land than Spain—how she would train the flowering vines about their porch and windows; how she could breathe the free fresh air without the fear of molestation; and how she would minister to his wants, and love him and care for him.

"There will be no Count Garcias there, father!" she said, as they fell back a little from the rest of the party. "No cruel magicians—no blood-thirsty mobs."

Ben Israel sighed, and replied he hoped not.

"Why did you start at night, father?" asked the maiden, after a little silence, as they passed over the barren but undulating soil. "Were you afraid to be seen by the citizens?"

"That was one reason, my dear," was the reply. "Another is, that a party left Toledo yesterday morning whom we engaged, to meet this morning somewhere upon this road. It is almost morning now, and we must soon come upon them. We intended to leave with them, but were providentially detained."

Syria lifted her gaze to the eastern horizon, and beheld the rosy beams of the coming day, to which she called her father's attention, and for some time they almost forgot their troubles in watching the glorious sunrise.

"Yonder is the party we intend to join!" cried Rabbi Benjamin, his gaze suddenly falling upon the gleam of tents in the distance. "We will hasten to them, and persuade them to spend the day in rest with us, and journey by night."

They put their tired steeds to their utmost speed, and soon came upon the little encampment of Jews which the rabbi had discovered. They were cordially received. Syria, whose late disappearance was known to all her people in her native city—and there were over thirteen thousand Jews in Toledo—was welcomed with manifestations of the wildest joy. The tents were given up to the new comers; their horses fed and

watered; breakfast was prepared; and after they had eaten and refreshed themselves, they slept away their fatigues of the night.

Towards evening, when the sun had lost some of its scorching power, the double party got everything in readiness and resumed its journey. They passed families on foot, weary and worn, with their few treasures in bundles upon their backs—people whom they had known as wealthy, and in possession of every luxury, but to whom the citizens of Toledo had refused, under the late edict, to sell horses or mules. They encountered others who had been provident enough, like Rabbi Benjamin, to possess means of transportation before the issue of the edict; but all looked sad and distressed.

The second day they rested, as also the third, travelling by night.

On the morning of the fourth day when, fatigued from their night's journey, they were about to encamp, Syria asked:

"Have we not almost reached the coast, father? I did not know the journey was so long."

"It is not the way that is so long," replied her father, "but our horses are heavily laden, and fewer in number than they should have been. We shall reach the sea-coast in two or three days more."

"I wish we had brought a part of our wealth," said the maiden, thoughtfully. "We have seen nothing of this terrible robber-chief, and you may need it."

"I have enough on my person for present necessities," returned Ben Israel, "but perhaps it would have been as well to have brought more, as you say. But what is that glitter in the distance, Syria?—your eyes are younger than mine."

Syria looked in the direction indicated, and beheld a party of horsemen emerging from a gorge between the hills. The glitter was the reflection of the sunlight upon their weapons.

"It is a party of armed men, father!" she said.

"Perhaps it is the band of the robber-chief?"

The alarm was instantly communicated to the entire party, and their few weapons were brought out for use, if required.

They had not many minutes of suspense, the body of horsemen dashing up the road toward them with drawn swords and levelled spears, and commanding them to surrender.

"To whom shall we surrender?" demanded Rabbi Benjamin.

"To Captain Monaldo—the Terror of the Jews!" shouted a deep voice, as a man dashed out from his companions, and came nearer to the fugitives. "I am Monaldo, the robber chief! Surrender!"

Syria gave a startled look at their terrible enemy. He was tall and portly, and sat his horse like a Centaur. His hair was of a reddish hue, and his highly-coloured face was almost hidden in a long flaxen beard. In strange contrast to his blonde hair and complexion, were his piercing black eyes, shaded with dark lashes. His girdle was filled with weapons, and altogether his aspect was most formidable.

The Jews held a hasty consultation; but the result can be foreseen. Their force amounted to ten fighting men, including Ben Israel, but not all of these were armed; while the enemy consisted of forty or more well-equipped men, and in all the vigour of their strength.

"We have a score of women and children with us," said Ben Israel, "and our resistance would be their certain death. Let us surrender. They will only rob us, and then permit us to go on. They have never retained a person captive, that I have heard of."

This being the only course open to them, they adopted it.

They laid down their arms, and signified that they had surrendered.

"Very good!" cried Monaldo, in shrill tones of satisfaction. "Lay out your valuables."

With sighs and groans, the Jews proceeded to exhibit to their enemies the treasures they had desired to take with them to pay their passage and settle them in some other country. Bags of gold, family jewels, stuffs from India, invalid weapons, &c., were all yielded up to the ruthless robber-chief.

"Where are the treasures of Ben Israel?" demanded Monaldo.

"You know me, then?" cried the Israeli in astonishment, as he felt the piercing gaze of Monaldo upon him.

A strange smile flitted across the brigand's face, as he replied:

"The whole country has heard of Ben Israel's wealth. Make no attempt to conceal it from me. Where is it?"

"I have it not!" was the reply.

"Search him, Bartolomeo," commanded the brigand leader, addressing one of his men. "We will see how long he will keep it from us!"

A coarse, ill-looking fellow leaped from his horse and advanced to the money-lender, who submitted quietly to his inquisitorial search, but nothing was found upon him save a belt well filled with gold.

"He must have millions!" cried Monaldo, fiercely. "Here is but a mere trifle! Search the baggage. Let nothing escape your notice!"

The order was obeyed, but little additional booty was found.

"So he has outwitted us!" muttered the robber chief. "We will see what starvation will do for him. He must have left the money behind him, or sent it on to the coast by a friend. I will know!"

He regarded Ben Israel a moment with flashing eyes, and then his gaze fell upon the sweet face of Syria, and involuntarily softened.

"Let the women hand me their ornaments," he commanded, observing that many of them wore costly jewels. "Bring them forward!"

The women reluctantly obeyed the mandate, and their friends beheld their last hope of escape vanish as the costly gems passed into the hands of their enemy.

"Oh, will he take mine, father?" whispered Syria, pale with distress. "If we can only manage to keep them, we can pay our passage from the country. If not, we must go back to Toledo for more—and risk death at the hands of Count Garcia!"

"Go forward, Syria," said her father, in a broken voice. "How can we escape the fate that has overtaken our companions?"

Syria unclasped her ornaments, and timidly advanced to Monaldo, holding them in her hand.

"Oh, let me keep them!" she pleaded, lifting her sorrowful eyes to his face. "Let me have them, to pay our passage to some other country."

"Pretty positioner!" murmured Monaldo, feeling his fawn beard. "Keep your diamonds. I wouldn't care a farthing to spring to those sweet eyes for a king's ransom. Put them on again."

Overjoyed at the success of her pleadings, Syria put them on, and ran to her father, full of joyful relief.

"We can go, father—they are mine again," she exclaimed. "They will sell for enough in Valencia to put us all right again."

"I liked not his bold free tone in speaking to you," returned Ben Israel. "His gaze too was too full of admiration. Would to heaven that we were safely on our way again!"

All the women of the party having now given up their trinkets, the baggage having been thoroughly searched, and the men examined and left destitute, their assistants prepared to take their departure.

"I hope you'll arrive at Valencia safely," said Monaldo, mockingly, as he looked upon the weeping and disheartened groups. "Ben Israel and his daughter must go with me. I wish to treat them to my hospitality."

In vain were the tears and prayers of Syria and her friends. The robber-chief was implacable.

"Give her to me!" he commanded, to one of his men. "Take the old Jew up behind you, and let us depart."

Ben Israel was forcibly mounted behind one of the men, and his daughter was handed up to Monaldo, who placed her in front of him, upon his horse, and supported her by passing his arm around her waist.

"Don't faint now, little trembler," he said, his eyes gleaming strangely and triumphantly upon her. "You have heard of me, I doubt not; but, after all, I am not so bad as I am painted. Even I have sufficient sense to appreciate your charming beauty and goodness."

Syria shrank from him, appalled by the light that beamed from his eyes, and by his jubilant manner.

"I have seen you somewhere before," she faltered, "but I cannot think where."

"Then don't try," he and he gave her a dangerous look, like a tiger about to spring upon its victim. "Where should you have seen Captain Monaldo?" and he laughed jeeringly.

Syria sank into a terrified silence.

The robber chief bade a mocking adieu to Rabbi Benjamin and his companions, who were lamenting the capture of Ben Israel and Syria, and then he commanded:

"To the retreat! Away!"

He touched his spurs to his horse, and led his band back towards the gorge, from which he had made his appearance, at a mad gallop.

CHAPTER XIV.

Indeed—indeed, sir! but this troubles me!

Shakespeare.

The bright blood left that youthful maiden's cheek;
Back on the rocky couch she leaned her form,
And her lips trembled, as it strove to speak.

Like a frail harp-string shaken by the storm

The bandits rode on through the gorge with their

prisoners and booty, and then hastened towards the hills as rapidly as their steeds would permit. In the course of an hour they arrived at the bald and rugged face of a mountain, at the foot of which they dismounted, and turned their horses loose to graze, then proceeding on foot.

They soon arrived at a little thicket of bushes growing out of the rock, and on approaching very close to this an aperture was seen behind the green foliage, and Monaldo said, with a grim smile:

"Here we are, my little Jewess. This is our retreat. I do not hesitate to let you into the secret, you see, since you will never have the opportunity to betray me."

Syria's heart sank with fear as she heard this declaration.

The bandit chief led the way behind the little bush thicket, dragging Syria after him through a round opening in the rock, and they found themselves in a vast and lofty cavern of splendid and unequalled beauty.

Long and clear stalactites hung from the walls like icicles, or chiselled marbles, and the roof was arched into a vast dome that gave back the sound of the voice in faint echoes. The walls were uneven, and here and there a torch or lamp was fixed into a niche flashing a full light upon the scene, and making it look like some enormous snow cavern. The floor was uneven, and here and there a stalagmite arose from its surface, serving as a lamp-holder or convenient table for wine and cards. Passages branched away in several directions from the large main cave, but their openings were indicated only by the patches of gloom upon the wall.

The room was occupied by a dozen men, who were engaged in playing games and drinking liquors, and who, despite the fact that several of them seemed to have been recently wounded, appeared to be enjoying themselves greatly.

They arose at the entrance of their leader, and greeted him with loud shouts and cheers.

"What success, captain?" was the general cry of all.

"Very good. We will have a distribution as soon as I have disposed of my prisoners," returned Monaldo, warming himself at the huge fire that glowed in one side of the cave, removing the chill from the underground apartment.

"Prisoners, eh?" repeated one of the men, with an appearance of interest. "Ah, I see."

His glance rested upon Ben Israel and Syria, who stood together, shrinking a little from the rude gaze bestowed upon them.

Syria had veiled her face, but her father's venerable appearance did not fail to create an impression on the minds of his captors, although they made insulting comments upon his beard and garments.

"Allow me to show you to your apartments," said Monaldo, mockingly, as he seized a flaming torch from the wall. "You may prefer to rest after your fatigues."

He gave his hand to Syria, and Ben Israel followed them from the apartment through a damp and chilly passage to a smaller cavern, having a door with a stout lock.

Into this he led them, saying:

"This is to be your room, Ben Israel, as long as you shall choose to keep it. Your daughter's is separated from yours by a curtain only. I shall now leave you to decide upon your future course. When I bring in your dinner I will dictate my terms as to your release."

He fixed the torch he had brought into a niche in the wall, and then withdrew, locking the door behind him.

"Oh, father, father," sobbed Syria, as she buried her face in Ben Israel's breast, "this is terrible!"

"I know it, my darling," returned her father, sadly. "Heaven knows that I would have gladly spared you such suffering with my life."

After her first natural burst of grief, Syria resolutely set herself to comforting her father, and he soon assumed an air of cheerfulness for her sake.

"Let us look about us," he said. "Who knows but we may discover some avenue of escape, although it does seem improbable?"

A speedy examination showed them that no such avenue existed.

The cave was nearly circular in shape, with jagged, uneven floor and walls. There were two massive wooden doors, with stout locks, the one by which they had entered, and another nearly opposite, which was securely locked. A pile of skins was in one corner, intended to serve as a couch.

Opposite this bed was a long and wide blanket, that divided the original apartment in two.

The room thus partitioned off presented a considerable contrast to Ben Israel's; the floor being covered with soft skins, whose long handsome fur was fine enough for a lady's wearing, the protruding heaps of rocks being also covered with fur; a neat couch filling

one corner; and the walls hung with a variety of rich stuffs, all stolen by the band of brigands from the fugitive Jews.

"Your room is comfortable, at least, Syria," said her father, in a tone of relief. "I feared it would be as bare and uncomfortable as mine. I thank heaven," he added, gratefully, "that we are not separated from each other by this robber chief—that in our present trouble we can comfort each other!"

"It might be worse, father, I suppose," returned Syria; "but we must remember that we have not heard the terms upon which Captain Monaldo will release us. If we are to be detained here long, we will share this room together. You are too old and too feeble to sleep in that outer room, father."

Syria exerted herself to make her father comfortable and cheerful, and was engaged in discussing with him the probable plans of Captain Monaldo in regard to themselves, when they heard a key grate in the lock of the little ante-chamber, and the next moment the bandit chief entered, bearing a large lamp in his hand.

"Your torch is burning low," he observed, in a voice that seemed disguised, "and I have brought you this lamp in its place. I want you to be comfortable, if you decide to stay with me."

He smiled grimly as he wheeled out a table from its position against the wall, placed the lamp upon it, and then clasped his hands.

The summons was obeyed by a couple of followers, who brought in trays of food, which they arranged, and then withdrew.

There was fish from the Mediterranean, wild fowl, and game from the woods, all cooked with the skill of an artist; and pomegranates, pine-apples, dates and bananas from the south of Spain, still fresh and luscious in appearance. Wine of the best brand finished the luxurious bill of fare.

"You are hungry, I notice," observed Monaldo, eyeing his prisoners keenly. "Here is food in abundance. Before you eat, let me tell you my terms. You must reveal to me the hiding-place of your wealth."

"I will not do it!" responded Ben Israel, indignantly. "I have worked hard for a lifetime to acquire what I possess, with the hope of enriching my daughter, and placing her for ever above all need—she and her descendants. What I have acquired by years of honest labour shall not be yielded up in a moment of fear to a robber!"

Monaldo smiled grimly, and stroked his tawny moustache.

"If you retain your secret," he asked, "what good will it ever do you? Neither you nor your daughter will be alive to enjoy it! I swear to you, Ben Israel, that not a morsel of food nor a drop of water shall assuage your hunger and thirst, until this secret is revealed to me!"

Ben Israel's face was convulsed with emotion, and he looked at his daughter, as though to solicit her advice.

As Syria met his gaze, the indignant scarlet sprang to her cheeks, her dusky eyes flashed, and she said:

"Then we will starve. My father shall never yield up his wealth on my account, to be sent forth a beggar, without means to get his daily bread, much less leave the country. Go, senor! You have your answer. Your presence is distasteful to us."

"Indeed!" mocked Monaldo. "How lovely you look, senorita, when you get your spirit up! But, angel as you look, you must eat as well as the rest of us. Perhaps a fast will make you a little more submissive."

He clasped his hands, and the two bandits returned, and carried away the food they had brought.

"At any time when you may feel disposed to relax from your obstinacy," proceeded the robber-chief, "a repast like this you have just rejected awaits you. A loud call from you will summon an attendant. I shall myself visit you at morning and evening, to witness the effect of the pleasant experiment you are bent on carrying out."

He took his departure, locking the door behind him.

"My brave child," said her father, tenderly, "your heroism amazes me. I cannot but rejoice at the answer you gave our persecutor, while I tremble when I think of your future."

"You need not," replied Syria. "I do not believe that this terrible robber-chief is bad enough to deliberately starve us to death. He must know that, when we are once dead, your money is for ever beyond his reach. He only means to frighten us."

Ben Israel shook his head.

"You know little of the world, my darling," he said. "Men are not the brave, gentle beings you have pictured them. I have carefully shielded you from all knowledge of such men as this Monaldo, Count Garcia, and the Magician of Toledo, and yet into their hands my innocent child has fallen."



[MONALDO SHOWS SYRIA AND HER FATHER THEIR PRISON.]

"But, father," whispered the maiden, her innocent cheeks flushing, "Juan is a man brave and gentle, and you are noble, too, and good; and perhaps even these bad men may have some good in them. At any rate," she added, "we will cherish hope."

Ben Israel sighed, but forbore to discourage his daughter further.

The day passed slowly, though there was no light from the outer and upper world to mark its going, and they only knew the coming of night by the fact of Captain Monaldo visiting them.

He replenished their lamp, inquired if they were ready to submit to his terms, and on being answered in the negative, smiled grimly, and withdrew.

"Are you hungry, darling?" asked her father, noticing with a keen pang the pallor of Syria's face.

"No, not very hungry," was the patient rejoinder. "But I am tired, father. If we could sleep we could forget our troubles."

Ben Israel assented, and took his daughter's head on his bosom, where she soon fell asleep.

"Perhaps," as Syria says, "he thought, looking fondly at her, 'Monaldo will relent. He cannot see this child perishing before his eyes. There must be a drop of human blood in him that will be touched by my petitions.' So thinking, he too slept."

They were awakened in the morning by the entrance of their jailer, who demanded:

"Well, Ben Israel, how do you feel this morning? Disposed to relent to your daughter?"

"Oh, senor," replied the Jew, "give my child food! I will give you one thousand pieces if you will set us free. I can send to a friend in Toledo, who will forward that sum to ransom us."

"And that is all you have to say?" interrupted Monaldo, jeeringly. "Keep your breath, my friend. Business calls me to the capital this morning, and I shall not return until the day after to-morrow. Here is a lamp that will suffice you till that time. No one will come near you in my absence. I shall carry the key of your room with me. I give you a last chance—will you or will you not tell me where your money is hidden?"

"If I should tell you," responded Ben Israel, "I have no certainty that I or my daughter should ever be freed. I will not give up my secret."

Monaldo looked disappointed and chagrined.

"Very well," he declared. "You will not be dead when I return, and you will probably be then submissive enough. If you are not, I shall try some other plan. Farewell."

He withdrew, and Ben Israel groaned with anguish.

Syria's soft arms stole about his neck, her sweet face was pressed to his, and by kisses and caresses she strove to win his thoughts from their terrible situation.

"If the worst comes, father," she said, "we can eat these skins. I've heard of starving men sustaining life on clothing!"

"Are you hungry now, darling?"

"No, father, only thirsty. And you?"

"I am thirsty, too. And three whole days must elapse before Monaldo's return. Perhaps four!"

"Did you notice, father," said Syria, seeking to divert his mind, "that these hangings are dress-stuffs? The silk is so delicate in pattern, so soft, and very costly, that I know they must have been intended for some very wealthy lady. I suppose those robbers stole them from the merchant who was taking them to Toledo?"

Ben Israel assented, and Syria exclaimed:

"Why, father, just notice that dove-coloured tissue shot with blue. It is exactly like the one I used to have. I remember the first time I wore it. It was when my dear mother was alive, and Rafael Ezra came to dine with us for the last time before leaving Toledo. You know how he admired it."

"Yes, my dear," groaned her father. "Your words recall to me the dress and the occasion. What will Rafael Ezra say if he goes to Toledo and finds us gone? Perhaps he has heard of the edict, and is waiting for us in Valencia. That is the conclusion to which I have arrived within the past fortnight. What must he think? How must he feel?"

Syria could not answer these questions, and then began to talk of her imprisonment by Count Garcia, her adventure with the magician, &c., and the hours slowly dragged away.

By the fourth morning of their imprisonment Syria's movements became languid, her eyes of an unearthly brightness, her cheeks scarlet, and her skin burning.

Ben Israel was better fitted to bear hardships than his delicately-nurtured child, but he too felt weak.

"Father," said Syria, reclining against him, and looking up into his face with a wandering gaze, "what time is it?"

"Alas, my child, I do not know. Night and morning are alike here. I think we have been here a week."

"A week, father!—why it seems a month!" returned Syria, her sweet voice sounding faint and weak.

"Do you remember the little dinner Esther used to cook for us? How nice the fishes were! How delicious the game and fowls! Don't you seem to

see our little table spread again in my secret bow, father? How much we wasted! how much we threw away!"

Ben Israel choked with tears, and he bent an agonized gaze upon the thin face of his child.

"Where is Esther now, father? Is dinner ready?"

"Don't you remember, Syria," he cried, in a sharp tone of anguish, "the robber took us from Rabbi Benjamin, and Esther, and all our party? Esther is at Valencia now."

"Oh!" ejaculated Syria, "I thought I heard her sounding our little dinner-bell, father. But it was the sound of a tinkling stream—a pretty shining brook. How beautiful it looks? Our own Tagus is nothing beside this clear, limpid river, so cool and sweet."

"My darling! my child!" cried the father, in anguish, "the dinner and the river are but illusion. You are so hungry and thirsty, that you imagine these things."

"Perhaps so," said the maiden. "But, father, they are beautiful, are they not? If I had but the power to stoop to drink of this stream! But I feel so weak!"

"My God!" wailed Ben Israel, his countenance convulsed by almost unendurable anguish, "my child will die before my eyes! She is but a shadow now and worn to a skeleton. Her mind has given way under her awful trials. She is dying. Help! help!"

He laid her gently upon her couch, gazed for a single instant upon her wan, thin face, and shadowy form, and then he sprang to the door of his own apartment, knocking upon it, and calling wildly for help. And the only answer that came to his ears was the sound of revelry from the main cave.

"Oh, God, must she die?" he screamed. "My child! My own ewe lamb! Cast down in her youth and beauty, like a flower before the reaper. It must not—shall not be!"

He dashed from one side of the room to the other, in a transport of fear and agony; and then exhausted by the vehemence of his emotion, he sank down beside his daughter, and nestled her in his bosom.

"If I could but save her!" he groaned.

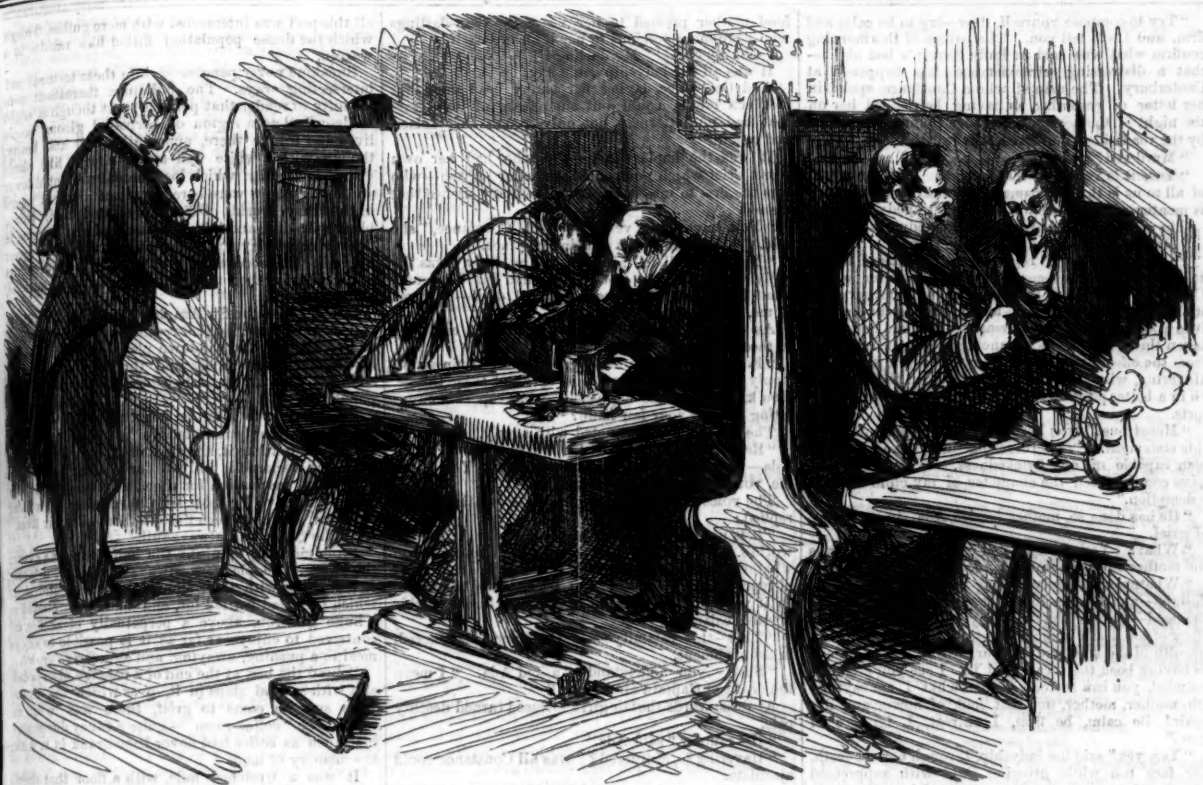
A thought struck him, and he leaped up in a tremour of joy.

"I will open one of my veins with my teeth!" he cried. "She shall drink my blood, and be saved!"

He bared his arm, and was about to tear its wasted flesh with his teeth, when a creaking, cautious sound came to his hearing.

Instinctively he paused and listened.

(To be continued.)



[A STRANGER AT THE CROSS.]

THE SEVENTH MARRIAGE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"The Turning Voice," "Man and his Idol," "Mrs. Larkell's Boarding School," &c.

CHAPTER XVI.

LEARNING THE TRUTH.

I see then, yet can scarce believe I do,
As sure I thought we had for ever parted!
Welcome—O, welcome!

Sheridan Knowles.

It was as if the exclamation "Murdered!" which burst from the lips of those gathered about the body of Leonard Havering on the bleak common, under the midnight sky, had echoed and re-echoed over all the land.

By morning all London was busy with the outrage, and before sunset that day it was the talk of remote villages, was known to the Highland shepherd, and found a topic at the peat fire of the Irish peasant.

The further it travelled the more romantic the story grew.

But in the main the version was that which had reached the guests in Lady Severn's drawing-room—that a common soldier had avenged a sister's or a sweetheart's honour by blowing his captain's brains out.

As to the soldier's guilt, there was not a doubt about it.

And Arthur Lomax, or, as he called himself, Abel Stone, levelled his carbine at poor Havering, and pulled the trigger in face of the whole regiment, the evidence against him could not have been more conclusive.

Every circumstance, however minute, pointed to him as the murderer.

There was a strong—some thought, even a justifiable—motive; there was the fact of his being on the spot; there was the finding of his cap close to the body; there was his suspicious attempt to return to his quarters unperceived over the barrack-wall; there was the state in which he then was, and, to complete the chain, there were his own unguarded admissions, almost sufficient in themselves to criminate him.

Nothing was wanting.

There was not even a loop-hole of which the logic of detection or the casuistry of a loving heart could avail itself.

Simply the shock of this terrible calamity was enough, so far as the loving mother and devoted sister

were concerned. The lucky chance that Arthur Lomax had taken the precaution to assume a false name, on finding himself a soldier, spared both a shock, which might have proved fatal in its consequences.

Thus, when Ada heard with horror the name of her sister mentioned at Lady Severn's in connection with this affair, she did not surmise the worst.

And when, next morning, she furtively perused the daily papers, trembling in every nerve and fibre at the harrowing narrative, Abel Stone's name still threw her off the scent.

True, she asked herself this question:

"Who is Abel Stone? Some of the reports describe Constance as his sister—some as his sweetheart. Both statements are clearly false. And then, where is the motive for the crime? Oh! that the dear, unhappy girl were here, that she might explain this mystery!"

Instinctively she put her hand to her bosom to draw thence the letter she had yesterday received, and in which Constance had explained her position, and spoke of her speedy return.

Before she could draw it forth, Lady Lomax entered the apartment.

A great change had come over her ladyship from the hour when she was found senseless, after the visit of the strange man whom Ada had encountered on the stairs.

About that man she preserved a mysterious silence.

What he came for, and in what manner his visit had produced its startling effect, she had studiously refrained from explaining. A question on the subject caused her to shudder and turn pale; and Ada, perceiving that her inquiries caused pain, and only elicited a promise of some revelation at a future time, forbore to press the subject.

But she could not fail to perceive, with the utmost concern, that her beloved parent was suffering the keenest mental anguish, and that, apparently, it was undermining her health.

She had become absent and nervous.

At the faintest unusual sound she would start up and listen with painful intensity, then heave a deep sigh and relapse into silence.

Her eyes, too, were ever on the watch—eager, restless, like the eyes of one who feared to encounter some hideous or distressing form.

Worst of all, this secret terror appeared, from its intensity, to absorb even that maternal feeling which had at first displayed itself in her distress at Arthur's disappearance.

She would still ask for news of him, but before an answer was given would relapse into thought, and

appear totally unconscious of what was addressed to her.

As she now entered, her restless eyes glanced in every direction. She advanced towards the window; but, as if she had done so unintentionally, stepped back in alarm, and drew the curtain a foot or two, then stood in its shadow.

"She does not come, darling!" she exclaimed. "It was to-day, was it not?"

"Yes," answered Ada; "if her strength permitted."

"True. I forgot. Perhaps she cannot come alone. We should have thought of that. Even now it may not be too late. A line to Hamnet Tresillian will bring him here—"

"Hamnet!" gasped the fair girl, in alarm.

"Yes. He is devoted to our darling, and on a line from you will be overjoyed to render her a service."

"A line from me?" said Ada, rather as if giving expression to her own feelings than replying to what her lady-mother had advanced.

And as she spoke her frame quivered with emotion.

It might have been the result of that secret and now hopeless passion of hers for Hamnet Tresillian, or it might have resulted from the thought that already Hamnet might know the truth in regard to the hapless Constance, and might shrink from her in loathing and disgust as one who had forfeited all claims to respect or consideration. Whatever was the cause, her emotion was too great to escape the notice of Lady Lomax.

"You tremble, Ada!" she exclaimed, abruptly.

"You are ill?"

"No, no! It is nothing," the poor girl ejaculated.

"But you are positively sinking! You have some ill news of Arthur—of Constance—or you have been terrified by that man?"

Starting from the shadow of the tabaret curtains in which she stood, her ladyship gave a hasty and furtive glance from the window, then clutching at the fair hand of her child, drew her toward the hearth, where they were safe from observation.

"Pray, pray compose yourself," cried Ada, falling at her ladyship's feet, as the latter sank into a chair, "and have no fear for me. But, dear mother, something has happened—"

"Ah! he has been here. The man—" her ladyship cried out.

"No, no. Whoever it is from whom you shrink in this mortal terror, he has not come again. What I have to tell you, and you must know it sooner or later, concerns our darling Constance."

"Constance? Oh, what has happened?" demanded the fond mother, with a face of alarm.

"Try to compose yourself, dear—try to be calm and firm, and I will tell you. The papers of this morning confirm what was said at Lady Severn's last night—that a distressing circumstance has happened at Canterbury. The man of whom Constance spoke in her letter of yesterday, as having befriended her on the night of the accident, has been found lying dead by the road-side—murdered, it is feared."

"Murdered?"

"Yes, it is very sad, very terrible. But the worst of all to us is that the name of our darling Constance is mentioned in connection with this tragedy."

The mother looked at her child incredulously.

"How? In what way?" she exclaimed.

"I did not tell you," replied Ada, "because I feared to distress you unnecessarily, that the letter which Constance wrote to us was dated from Canterbury. In it she explained—and this also I omitted in reading it to you, and for the same reason—that she had been taken there in a state of unconsciousness, resulting from the effect of the fever, in order, as she says, that Havering, whose regiment was stationed there, might be in a better position to attend to her wants and comforts."

"Monstrous!" was her ladyship's commentary on this statement. "This Havering must be a villain, a man capable of any wickedness. Why, he might have compromised the character of my child beyond redemption."

"He has done so, mother," cried Ada, in an agony of grief.

"What? You do not—you cannot mean it?" was the mother's passionate demand.

"Whatever his motives, dear mother, whatever his designs—and heaven forbid that we should misjudge the dead—that is the unhappy result. Already the story of his death is spreading through the length and breadth of the land, and it is our darling who is named as having been the occasion of it. I see you are confounded, you can scarcely realize what I am saying! Oh, mother, mother, not that look of horror and despair! Be calm, be firm, I entreat, I implore of you!"

"Yes, yes," said her ladyship, through her set teeth, her face the while growing rigid with suppressed agony, "let me know the worst, Ada—the very worst."

"You have heard it, dear mother," was the reply.

"You are sure?"

"Quite sure."

"I can believe you. The pure name of my child is in every mouth—as the cause, you say, of a dreadful crime. But how, Ada, how the cause?"

The distressed girl dared not utter the whole truth. "That is, to an extent, involved in mystery," was her answer.

"But do they suspect her of the crime?"

"Oh, no—no!"

"Was it in defence of her that—"

"No. You mistake, mother; no suspicion of bloodshed rests on her. It is some wretched tale of jealousy—some ignorant invention, let us hope, that has mixed up my sister's name with this calamity. That she is innocent, that she is pure as the drifted snow, spotless as the unsold dove, we know, mother—we are certain, are we not?"

"I trust so—I trust in heaven that it is so!" ejaculated her ladyship.

But the loving sister heard the words with dismay—heard them, and saw the hard, stony look with which they were accompanied.

"You have no doubt, no suspicion of Constance, mother?" she demanded, half-starting to her feet.

"You cannot have! You will not receive her coldly? You will not refuse to clasp her to your bosom? You cannot—you have not the heart?"

Instead of replying, the distracted woman threw her arms about her daughter's neck, and burst into tears.

"Forgive me, my child!" she sobbed. "I know not what to think, what to credit. My misery is more than I can bear. Oh, what, what have I done, that I should be marked out for these misfortunes, that I should be the victim of others' villany, that my children should be torn from me, and that shame, and suffering, and dishonour should become my portion? It is cruel, it is unjust—yes, unjust, unjust!"

"Oh, mother! What is it you say?" exclaimed Ada. "You must not lose your faith in heaven. You must not murmur against the decrees of providence. Believe that all will be well, that all is for the best—and hark—already—that footstep! Oh, mother, mother! she is here!"

They rose.

With one impulse they stood, clasped in each other's arms, and listening eagerly.

There was a light, quick step upon the stairs.

"It is she! It is she!" they sobbed, hysterically.

Then—while they wept and trembled, longing, yet fearing they knew not what—a bright face darted into the room, a cry of joy rang in their ears, and the

fond mother pressed to her heart the twin-darlings who were more precious to her than life itself.

"Oh, my child! My darling!"

It was all her ladyship could say.

And Constance, laying her sunny head upon her mother's breast, could but shed tears of joy—tears that had no bitterness, but only brought her solace and relief.

It was the hapless Ada—she who had her own secret grief which none could share or lighten—who was the first to interrupt the momentary silence that ensued.

"You have been very, very ill, Constance," she said. "I see the traces of it in your face."

"Yes, dear, ill in mind as well as body," was the reply. "Oh, I dare not recall what has happened, what I have suffered since we parted, days—it seems to me, weeks—ago!"

An involuntary shudder gave significant emphasis to these mournful words.

"For one moment, darling," cried the twin-sister, "only for one moment, we must speak of these things. You know what has happened—what report is circulating against your fair fame?"

The sister's face contracted with agony.

"Report!" she ejaculated. "What report? Oh, Ada—mother—your looks are strange. You doubt me, you suspect me. Oh, cruel, cruel!"

The voice of Ada was choked with emotion as she replied:

"It is not our doubt, our mistrust, darling; it is the world's. We know your goodness and your purity; whatever may have happened, you will hear no word of reproach from our lips; but let us know the worst. Is it your misfortune to have been the cause of this horrible calamity?"

"This—this calamity—" Constance stammered, in astonishment.

"Surely you understand?" asked Ada. "I mean the death of Captain Havering!"

At those words the fair girl addressed turned deathly pale.

"His murder," said Ada.

"Havering? Murdered?" was all Constance could ejaculate.

"You haven't heard of it?" the sister asked, in surprise.

"No."

"You are not aware that he was found last night dead on the open common—shot through the head?"

"Merciful powers!" cried the distracted girl, "who is guilty of this sin?"

"A soldier—one of his regiment—"

"His name—his name?"

"It has escaped me."

"Oh, it could not be, it is impossible that Arthur—"

"Arthur!" shrieked Lady Lomax.

"No," said Ada, "no, mother—Constance—do not fear. I have recalled the name. The soldier is called—Abel Stone."

"It is he!"

The horror of the moment in which those words were uttered baffles description.

CHAPTER XVII.

ST. ASAPH'S CROSS.

As ancient is this hostelry
As any in the land may be,
With weather-stains upon the wall,
And stairways worn, and crazy doors,
And creaking and uneven floors,
And chimneys huge, and tiled, and tall.

The firelight shedding over all,
The splendour of its ruddy glow
Filled the whole parlour large and low.

Longfellow.

News of the murder, ever spreading like a circle in water, reached in due course the neighbourhood of St. Asaph's—the old city church that did so large a stroke of business in city marriages.

This structure had, as we know, been hustled and elbowed out of the open space, which its ugliness had once made hideous, and was now fairly bricked out of public view. Time had been when it had enjoyed the dignity of a churchyard, in which, tradition affirmed, city magnates slept their last sleep under the shadow of rustling boughs, musical with the chirp and twitter of city sparrows.

But if this had ever been so, it was in the far past, before ground in the city fetched so many guineas the square foot—far too many for it to be left to the use of the dead. Thus the churchyard had long disappeared, consecrated though it might have been, and great hulking warehouses and workshops had risen in its place, and had ventured so near to the sacred edifice itself, that only a narrow passage ran round it, and its main approach was but a sort of blind-alley.

The church-passage communicated with other passages, branching off in various directions, and so

all this part was intersected with mere gullies, through which the dense population flitted like rabbits in a warren.

Sunshine never penetrated into these tortuous and intersecting ways. The buildings thereabout were too lofty to render that possible; but though it might be described as a region of perpetual gloom, people lived and thrived there, apparently well and hearty, though with a white and sickly aspect, like plants grown in a cellar, which lose the natural tint of flower and leaf. Shops were here, some not without reputations in the busy world. Offices presented their fronts, black with dirt, and with the smoke of gas burning in their recesses day and night. Here also were queer old inns, with eccentric signs, some of them centuries old, and having their traditional rights, usages, customs, and customers.

One of these, the St. Asaph's Cross—but familiarly called "the Cross"—in that region—was in high repute. It was a dingy, tumble-down place, occupying a dirt corner, and its ugliness and the general absence of comfort about it seemed to constitute the secret of its popularity.

Any attempt to alter or improve the Cross, would have been strongly resented by its frequenters.

They didn't like it, they grumbled at it, called it a hole, and declared it only fit for a dog; but it had a charm and fascination for them, nevertheless, as such places will have for those who have inherited a liking for them, and have been used to them all their lives.

So the Cross was always full.

From morning to night the half-door was ever on the swing. People were always at the bar, drinking or defending with their elbows the shops and stalls which they had battled for, and had seen cooked on a huge gridiron, above a perpetually clear fire, and contrived to enjoy—as far as it is possible to enjoy a meal in a pushing, swaying, and aggressive crowd.

Behind the bar, at the end of a passage always dark, and with several steps in it, over which the unwary were sure to come to grief, there was what was termed the "coffee-room"—quite a fancy designation, inasmuch as coffee had never been drunk in it within the memory of man.

It was a wretched hole, with a floor that shivered down toward the middle, and a low ceiling, shivering also, and threatening to fall, in spite of the two stout beams which intersected it. On one side there was a fireplace, wide and draughty, with a mantel-piece close to the ceiling, only adorned with a snuff-box, holding about half-a-pound, and open to general use. On the other sides the room was partitioned off with boxes, each furnished with a table, consisting of a single plank and two seats, each a single plank also, covered with a piece of dingy carpet.

The attractions of such a place are hard to define, yet its frequenters assembled night after night, finding there a charm in which their homes were wanting.

Among these was the clerk and sexton of the neighbouring church. For forty years or more old Amos Chirper had discharged his functions at St. Asaph's, and during all that time he had been a nightly visitor at the Cross. One night in the year alone he sat the first on the right of the fire, was vacant. That was Christmas night; yet so strong is the effect of habit, that the rumour went that even on that night he had been known to steal in like a ghost, at midnight, as the bar was closing, for a toothful of his favourite pineapple rum, fortified with which, or rather, it would seem, with a sight of the old place, he departed to rejoin the friends with whom the night was being spent.

There was nothing remarkable about Chirper, except, perhaps, his strong resemblance to the waiter, David, who had been in attendance on this room for beyond the memory of man. Both had yellow, bald heads, thinly scattered with dirty hair; both were whips of white neckcloth, dingy shirt-fronts, and swallow-tailed coats.

In each case the dress was a livery, and neither the clerk of St. Asaph's nor the waiter at the Cross would have dared to assume any other form of attire. But this identity of costume sometimes led to a mistake, which was considered by the frequenters of the room a joke of the very rarest quality. Strangers invading the sacred precincts would mistake Amos for David, and give their orders to the former in a terse and peremptory manner, whereas every man would address his neighbour, and nod and wink until the whole room exploded into one irresistible burst of laughter.

Something of this kind occurred on the night after the Canterbury murder.

The room was occupied with the particulars of that tragic event, and suggestions and surmises were becoming rife, when the creaking door was turned open with a rough hand, and a stranger was seen standing in the doorway.

He hesitated for a moment, as if summing up the character of the place, then, with a swagger, strode across the room to an empty box, in a far corner, in which there was little light.

Every man there took stock of the stranger.

They saw that he was past the prime of life, that he had fierce black eyes, a bold face, and an impudent bearing; and they saw little more, for he wore his hat tilted over his eyes, a red shawl about his chin, and a loose, amply-flowing coat, that hid all beneath it.

"Now then, chuckhead!" said this individual, looking fiercely at Chirper, and bringing his fist down with a bang on the table, "look alive!"

"Sir?" replied Amos, with a wink of his left eye at his companions.

"Brandy," shouted the stranger; "brown, hot, strong, with lemon. Quick about it!"

"Sir?" repeated Amos, in his former tone.

The man glared at him, and half rose, as he said:

"Sir!—what do you mean by 'sir'?" Like your own impudence to be sitting, taking your ease in a room like this. Brandy, I say. Do you hear that? Brown, hot, strong—"

"Oh, you want the waiter," said the clerk, in a well-measured tone of surprise. "I'll ring."

And he tugged at the bell amid the loud guffaws of the company, who seemed to enjoy this old joke the more the oftener it was repeated.

The only man in the room who did not appear to enjoy it was the intruder, whose face had a sullen swell upon it as David shuffled in, and meekly demanded his pleasure. The order was repeated and obeyed. The man who had given it looked from David to Chirper, and from Chirper back to David, but made no remark, offered no apology; and, folding his arms on the table before him, soon appeared to be lost in his own reflections.

Meanwhile, the conversation touching the murder was resumed at the point at which his arrival had interrupted it.

"My opinion is," said a bullet-headed man, who, from the length of the pipe he was smoking, should have been, and perhaps was, a churchwarden—"my opinion is there's more facts as'll come to light."

"Hearing?" asked Chirper.

"That we ain't got to the rights o' the thing," said the churchwarden. "They've a-bin and jumped at the conclusion as there was a some'ick wrong between the 'ere officer and this 'ere soldier. Which, maybe, there was. But again, maybe, there wasn't. It's all guess-work, so far as I see. And though the facts is doing agin this Abel Stone—which I own they do—strong agin 'im—still, if I was on the jury, I'd say more, or I'd stand out till I was black in the face afore I'd give in to a verdict o' guilty. I would, and I would."

Amos Chirper shook his head, and smiled as he raised his glass to his lips.

"Clear case, I'm afeared, John," he said. "I'm not one that goes in for circumstantial evidence, I own; but, hang it, if this young man—which they say he's a gentleman born, though a soldier—if he didn't do it, who did? If he hadn't cause to do it, who had? Since it all goes dead agin him."

"Be it do—so it do!" echoed the room.

"It's strong, I grant ye," said the churchwarden, raising his glass.

"So strong that he'll swing for it, I'm afeared," remarked a bald-headed man.

"Right," cried Amos; "and, if he did the murder, it's only just that he should. Though, I grant ye, that if he had had the provocation as they do say he had—"

"This young spark—which we know well what them military ones is—had a-been goin' on with the lad's sister, promiscuous and improper-like, why, while our honorable condemn 'im, our hearts, I'm well sure, must be a-contrite 'im."

Looking round for the applause sure to follow this beautiful sentiment, Amos Chirper suddenly encountered the black eyes of the stranger glaring at him across the room.

The man was no longer musing.

He was looking up, and listening with keen attention.

Something in his glance—something in the expression of his face—caused the old clerk to start, and find him with an indefinable but uncomfortable feeling.

"You're talking of Havering's murder?" the stranger asked.

"Ye-es," faltered Chirper.

"As clear a case as ever was known," said the other, authoritatively.

"So I say," the clerk returned.

"And as had a one," the stranger added, with a surly growl. "Why, if we're to go on letting private soldiers take the law in their own hands against their own officers—if we're to let fellows with fire-arms revenge their fancied insults with impunity—what's to become of the army? Where are we going to get gentlemen to pay their thousands for commissions if this is to be the game? And if we don't get gentlemen to be in command, where shall we be? Who'll obey Jack Hobbs or Tom Styles? Not a man."

The churchwarden had it in his mind to say that he believed the purchase-system was the curse of the British army, and that he would prefer to see its officers rising from the ranks, but while he hesitated, Amos struck in.

"There's rather a sing'lar coin-ci-dence," he said, "about this affair."

The stranger looked up sharply.

"Yes," the other pursued, interpreting the look into a question; "maybe you've noticed the name of the young woman who's said to have been the cause of this tragedy?"

"No. What is her name?" the man asked.

"Why, such o' the papers as give it say that she calls herself Constance Lomax."

The man who had asked for the information sprang to his feet.

"Lomax?" he gasped.

"That's the name," said Amos.

"And—Constance? Are you sure of that, too?"

"Oh, yes; I ain't likely to forget, because of the coin-ci-dence," was the answer.

The stranger looked at him for a moment with sharp, fiery eyes, that seemed as if they would penetrate his very soul; then, glancing round the room as if anxious to ascertain how far his manner had betrayed him, resumed his seat.

"To what coincidence do you allude?" he asked, gruffly.

"Well, 'tis no great matter," returned the clerk; "but it's queer for all that. You must know, mister, that I, who you took to be David, the waiter here, have been for nigh forty year clerk and sexton at St. Asaph's Church, close by!"

He waited to see what impression this announcement would make, but it did not apparently produce the slightest effect, so he went on.

"In that church," he said, "we've a-many weddings, a great many weddings, I may say, and no lie, and to the day we had one rather sing'lar—rather special of the sort. We kept it snug and close, as we was bound to, till 'twas over; but now there's an end on't. I'm doin' nothin' wrong, I expect, in naming names. Well, one of the names I'll mention, as it was a rum 'un. It was Immac—that was the Chris'n name—Garmeson, that was 'other."

"Eh, what! Immac Garmeson married at St. Asaph's secretly?" the stranger asked.

"Yes."

"And who—who was the miserable—what was the woman's name?"

"Why that's it. That's where the coin-ci-dence lays," replied Amos, greatly astonished, and not a little alarmed at the effect he was creating. "But, p'raps—"

"Her name?" demanded the other, sternly.

"Well, if I must out with it, I must," replied Chirper; "but you've heard part of it already. The name she signed was Ada Lomax."

The stranger heard, and, as if thunder-struck by this communication, was silent. Then, leaving his seat, and advancing to where the old clerk sat, he said:

"Are you certain of these facts?"

"I am," he replied, in a tremour as he spoke; "but—"

"Can you show me the register?"

"Yes."

"To-night?"

"Lor' bless you, no."

"Why not?"

He stooped and whispered in the old man's ear as he added:

"I will pay you for your trouble—pay you well."

"It's impossible," said Chirper, firmly.

"Nonsense, man; it's merely inconvenient."

"So inconvenient that I couldn't think of it," said Amos.

But, as he spoke, the other stooped and whispered again; this time in so low a tone that his words were only audible to the man to whom they were addressed. Singularly enough, the clerk replied in a whisper, and the stranger resumed his seat.

Shortly after he took his leave, wishing the company a "gruff" "good night," and not honouring Amos Chirper even with a special nod.

"Well," said the churchwarden, as the door closed, and drawing a long breath as he spoke, "you was right to chuff him off, Amos. I should be sorry to be alone in a church with him after dark."

Amos agreed in this; then, fidgeted, coloured, let his pipe out, and lit it with a trembling hand. Then he tried to lead the conversation into a fresh channel, failed, became nervous, absent, and quite unlike himself.

Presently he had his glass replenished, and gulping down the smoking rum, muttered some incoherent excuse about being over-tired or feeling sleepy, and took his leave.

When, about midnight, the old frequenters of the Cross were making for home, and passed under the walls of St. Asaph's, it struck them that there was an

appearance as of a light in the vestry—or it might be only the reflection of a gas-lamp on the windows.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE SIGNATURE OF THE DEAD.

Another moment. Deem me not a man
Who loosely cleaves. Had I been such a one,
I had been shaken off by sighs, neglects,
Shortcomings, and offences long ago.

The Secretary.

Ill blows the wind that profits nobody.

Shakespeare.

SINCE all England was busy with the story of it, no one will marvel that the murder of Captain the Hon. Leonard Havering should form a topic of conversation at the banking establishment of Messrs. Plater, Garmeson, and Co.

Such topics are useful in the way of business.

Under cover of a scrap of news, a floating scandal, or, falling both, a smart anecdote, matters are often arranged and negotiations concluded, which it would have been even impossible to approach in an open, point-blank manner.

This all business-men know, and no one knew it better than Immac Garmeson, the second partner in the bank. A shrewd, clever, unscrupulous man, he had for years guided the ship, of which he was nominally only second in command, through the shoals and quicksands of speculation, and had grown rich, while at the same time he had gained for himself a reputation for those very qualities in which he was really wanting—probity, honesty, and uprightness.

As we say of a good chess-player, every man on the board was known to this man, and he had been guilty of one or two moves not recognized by honest players. But he had been fortunate. He had escaped detection and exposure, and was widely and generally esteemed.

It is so sometimes, but seldom for long, for—

Though the mills of God grind slowly,
Yet they grind exceeding small;
Though with patience he stands waiting,
With exactness grinds he all.

One of the banker's fast friends at this period was Count Rosario, whom he—availing himself of a privilege as the family banker—had introduced at Lady Severn's ball. Little was known of this man, nothing in his favour. It was surmised that he was rich, it was admitted that he was devoted to gaming, and beyond that, his chief recommendation in society was that he was Garmeson's friend.

In the dusk of the evening succeeding that mentioned in the last chapter, Rosario was enjoying the privilege of an interview with the banker, in his own office, as he called it—a handsome room at the bank.

Gradually, as they talked, the darkness had thickened, but Garmeson did not ring for lights, as the red glare of a brightly-blazing fire was sufficient to enable each to see the face of the other with distinctness.

The banker was seated; the count stood on the hearth-rug, leaning one elbow on the black-marble mantelpiece, and, as he so stood, the fire-light threw a grotesque and monstrous shadow of him on the ceiling—a shadow that took the form of a demon, hovering ready to dart upon its victim.

The talk of these two men was of business—and the murder.

Of business now and then, by fits and starts; but chiefly, as if by some singular fascination, of the murder.

"Do you question this boy's guilt?" asked the count, who spoke excellent English, after a pause.

"Is there a question about it?" asked the banker.

"You know best," replied the count.

Garmeson looked up. The seal-like eyes of Rosario were glowing like fire, and the demon shadow quivered, as with life, above his head.

"Neither you nor I," he replied, quietly, "can know anything but this: that if he is guilty, affairs have taken an unfortunate turn. Our part in it is simple."

"Very," said the Italian, dryly.

"It was necessary to my ends—no matter what these ends were—that Arthur Lomax should appear to have taken flight—that he should, in fact, be lost for a few days. Your admirable arrangements, my dear count, secured that. The idea of the enlistment seemed, at the time, a master-stroke."

"It was, I flatter myself," said the count.

"Capital! And who could anticipate that a foolish girl would go and give this serious turn to the whole thing? It is a pure accident. Your conscience cannot accuse you of being even an accessory to this murder?"

"Accuse me of what?" cried the count, angrily, shifting his position and the demon shadow with it.

"I mean," said Garmeson, "that this result does not follow as a natural cause from your act. You could not have seen or prevented it. Simply, it is to be deplored."

"If it gets us into trouble—yes."
 "Nonsense! It cannot."
 "No?"
 "How is it possible? Our part in the business stops short before this catastrophe happened."
 "True. One part did; but—"

And the count shrugged his shoulders. The action, exaggerated in the demon shadow, seeming like the lifting of wings.

"It seems to me, count," said the banker, again looking up uneasily, "that you inculcate a suspicion of conduct on my part such as—such as you have no warrant for doing. You would hint that while your hands are clean, mine—"

"Hush!" said the count, interrupting him.

"Listen!" His quick ear had caught the sound of voices in altercation.

It was growing nearer. The banker, as he ceased speaking, could hear it, accompanied by a scuffling of feet. Angry at the interruption, he rose, and hastening to the door, threw it open.

As he did so, a man stumbled into the room.

There was just light sufficient to show that he had black eyes, a bold face, and that a red shawl enveloped his throat.

Several clerks were following him, they having evidently attempted to prevent his entrance.

"Who are you, fellow?" cried the enraged banker.

"You know," was his sullen answer.

"Not I," the other exclaimed, indignantly, eyeing him closely by the firelight.

"No matter, then; but my business is urgent. I want money," said the fellow.

"I daresay," Garmeson replied; "but as you are late, and the bank is closed, and I don't choose to be intruded upon in this way, I'll trouble you to quit my office, and that instantly."

Instead of obeying, the man dropped into the nearest chair, and coolly crossed his legs.

"Wait a bit," he said. "I tell you that the business on which I come admits of no delay. I tell you further, for your own sake, that it is strictly private and confidential, and that—as a matter of business, let us say—you will regret compelling me to make the statement I have to make before these gentlemen."

He pointed to the clerks as he spoke.

Garmeson hesitated. The fellow's manner was bold, defiant, and aggressive. The banker was no coward, and he might have had his secret reason for preferring that what passed should pass in private.

"Go!" he said to the clerks.

They obeyed, and quitted the room, closing the door after them.

"You know me well enough!" said the intruder, as they left.

"No."

"Look at me."

He rose and drew nearer the fire, then raised his hat. The flickering light of the flames lit up the features of the man who had passed Ada Lomax on the stairs of the house at Eccleston Square a few days since. Those features also pertained to the man who had swaggered in at the Cross the night before. On neither of those occasions had Imlac Garmeson beheld them; but now, as he gazed, some memory of a more remote time served for their instant recognition.

"You!" he cried, starting back; "and you dare come here?"

"Yes."

"Here, where your handwriting is known better than your face?"

"Precisely."

"Are you mad, or is this mere foolhardiness? Have you forgotten the old love—better call it by its right name—the old hate, between us? Do you think me a man likely to forgive or forget?"

The man only smiled—a hideous smile.

"You had a friend here when I came in," he said, looking round. "Where is he?"

In his astonishment, Garmeson had forgotten the Count Rosario, and he now looked hastily through the apartment in search of him. But nowhere was he to be seen. A curtain drew before the window, and several doors opened out of the room; but the curtain concealed no one, and the doors were locked.

"Strange!" muttered the banker. "Could he have left with the clerks without a word?"

He was about to ring and ask, but the visitor interposed.

"What matters," he said, "so that he is gone? And now to answer you. I came here to-night calmly and advisedly, indifferent as to your love or hate, for I have knocked about the world too long to care for either. My object is simply—money."

"And you expect me to give it you?"

"I do."

"Preposterous!"

"We shall see."

"What! must I remind you that every moment you stay here is one of peril? Are you ignorant that your bold attempt to rob the man whose murder is in every mouth, was discovered before that horrible event? Discovered, I repeat."

"No! Did *he* know of it?"

"He did."

"Did he, or did you for him, trace it to me?"

The banker hesitated.

"It was so traced," he at length replied.

"He knew that I had forged his name, that by so doing I had appropriated a thousand pounds of his money to my use, and you ask me to believe that he—this Leonard Havering, who never set eyes on me in his life—took no steps to denounce me, or to have me brought to justice? Is that so?"

"What if death overtook him too suddenly?" asked Garmeson.

"Did it? Why speculate, when you know? Did his death prevent the steps he would have taken against me, and does it also stay your hands—you being his banker, and knowing what you know?"

"Yes. It is so."

"Garmeson!" cried the man, starting to his feet, "do you take me for a child—for an idiot? Do you think I have forgotten the past to which you have alluded? That I have forgotten how I robbed you of the woman who would have brought you a princely fortune? And how, afterwards, I refused to let you take the one step which would have gratified your new ambition—that of an alliance with good blood? Can you think it possible that I have forgotten, or can credit that you forget, these things—still more, that I can believe you have had the opportunity of revenging yourself by crushing me, and have let it slip?"

The banker smiled.

"We have had reasons—good and sufficient reasons—for what we have done," he said.

"You may—you doubtless have," returned the other.

"What those reasons are, is nothing to me. Enough that if they were sufficient to justify you in cashing a forged cheque, they must be strong enough to make you do the same with another. See here," he added, thrusting his hand into his breast, and drawing out a pocket-book, from which he selected a slip of paper.

"You know that signature?"

The banker held it down in the strong glare of the fire.

"Leonard Havering!" he read, slowly.

"Just so."

"A clumsy imitation of his writing," Garmeson continued.

"What of that? Clumsy or clever, who is to swear that he did not write it? He is dead."

"True. And do you suppose that I am going to conspire with you to rob his estate of this amount—nine hundred and eighteen pounds?"

"I am sure of it!"

It was curious to watch the faces of the two men at that moment—the banker's in shadow, as he stood with his back to the fire, the other glowing in the bright red light, and both animated by strong and excited feelings. That of Imlac Garmeson was almost distorted as he listened to the threat conveyed in those words just spoken.

"You presume on the success of your villainy!" he faltered.

"Rather upon my knowledge of the cause of that success."

"You have ascertained, then—"

"What it had been well that I had known sooner," was the reply. "I have learned the nature of your fancied triumph, and the price at which you have purchased it."

"No! You do not know that—"

"That you have gone through a form of marriage with my—with Ada Lomax."

"How did you learn this?"

"Perhaps I was present at St. Asaph's; perhaps I have seen the register with your names to it. Anyhow—it is true."

"You are right," said Garmeson, in a proud, defiant tone, as he drew himself up to his full height, and looked down on his seated visitor. "It is true!"

"And you are keeping this a secret?"

"Yes—for the present. Have we not the right to do so?"

"Assuredly. It is wise to do so, as you know, and as I also know."

"You know—" the banker exclaimed, with a suddenly changing countenance.

"That there is good reason why you should purchase my silence, at least, by recognizing the validity of Leonard Havering's signature to this cheque."

It was quietly said. There was no temper, no bluster displayed. But Imlac Garmeson writhed as if under some bodily torture. His teeth ground together, and, as he ruminated, he bit the nails of his fingers to the quick.

"Devil!" he muttered, at length. "You have your fang in me. I must yield. But beware—you have me!"

"I know that you will give me your private cheque in exchange for this," was all that the other deigned to reply.

And he was right. The banker complied with his request, and cashed the forged cheque.

(To be continued.)

ALL ALONE.

By E. D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH.

Author of "The Hidden Hand," "Self-Made," &c., &c.

CHAPTER CXII.

BRIGHTER HOPES.

Oh, how you wrong our kindness, doubting us! With friends there is not such a word as doubt! Where amity is tied with bonds of truth, All benefits are there in common set.

THE new year opened a little more hopefully for the widow and her children. The Christmas gift of Amy good in mind as well as body. For while the food greatly nourished her failing strength, the kindness restored her faith in the kind feelings of her creditor, so that, instead of shivering with fear of him, she glowed with gratitude to him.

Never before did food go so far or do so much good in one little family. The two chickens lasted Amy a whole week. No one else ate of them. Owen really preferred the gingerbread, mince pies, and molasses and bread, all of which rather indigestible food his healthy stomach and his active out-door work enabled him to dispose of. And Nancy affected a preference for savoury fried rashers of bacon, of which that convenient brother Tom of hers had sent a Christmas supply.

So the delicacies were left for Amy, and nourished her exceedingly. She actually picked up flesh in that one week.

Owen went every day to the woods to gather sticks for the fire, and to set his trap for birds. And he always returned with a large bundle of faggots, and occasionally also with a bird.

But when a week or two had passed away, and meat grew scarce again, and Amy's face began to look wan and hungry—for it requires plenty of nourishing food to keep up the strength of a nursing mother, particularly when she is nursing two children, and is naturally fragile in constitution—Owen grew very anxious, and sought about in his own mind for a method by which he might make a little money to buy meat for his sinking mother.

He reflected that, work as diligently as he might, and as he did, at his faggot gathering, and at his trapping, and at everything that his hands and feet could find to do, he had still abundance of leisure time left. And this he longed to employ profitably for his mother's sake.

One morning he formed a sudden resolution, upon which he immediately acted. He started out in search of work.

He went over all the village, calling at every shop to know if they wanted a boy to carry out parcels. But everywhere he received the same discouraging answer—"No, they did not."

The very last place he called at was Lacy's shop, which, it will be remembered, was exactly opposite his mother's house.

As Owen entered, Lacy himself was standing behind the counter, engaged in rolling up and arranging goods that had just been displayed to a customer who had left. There was no one else in the shop.

Owen looked down involuntarily, longingly, curiously, at the handsome case of perfumery, cutlery, and toilet apparatus that stood upon the counter; and he thought of the time when the empty case on his own counter was full, and he made a little money every day by selling its contents as long as they lasted, but was unable to save a shilling towards restoring the stock when it was gone.

Mr. Lacy, having finished rolling up his goods, now turned to Owen, who stood respectfully waiting his leisure to speak.

"Well, my little lad, what is your pleasure? Anything in my line to-day?" he cheerfully inquired.

"Oh, no, sir! Mother wouldn't think of getting anything else until she has paid for what she has had," said the boy.

"Oh, that is of no consequence whatever. I wish you would tell her so."

"Thank you, sir, I will," said Owen; and then he stopped, and seemed to hesitate, for frequent repetitions had rather discouraged him.

"Well, now then, my lad, what is it? You have come for something?" said Lacy, heartily.

"If you please, sir, it was to ask you if you might want a boy," said Owen, bashfully.

"A boy? No, my lad. What should I want with a boy?"

"I thought you might want one to run with messages, or carry parcels, or sweep the shop, and make the fire."

"No, I do not. My porter does all that, and is idle half his time."

Owen's countenance, not very hopeful on his first entrance, now fell perceptibly.

"Was it for yourself you were inquiring," said Lacy, kindly.

"Oh, yes, sir! Do you know of any one that wants a boy, sir?"

"No, I do not. But why should you want a place as errand boy?"

"Oh, sir, to do something to help mother!" said Owen, in a half heart-broken tone.

"Is that necessary, my lad?" said Mr. Lacy, bending over the counter, and looking attentively into the anxious face of the child.

"Oh, yes, indeed, sir! very, very necessary," replied Owen.

"But the shop? I thought you were required at home to mind the shop?"

"Oh, no, sir! there is nothing to do in the shop."

"How is that?"

"There are no customers now."

"But why? It is the only shop of the kind in the village."

"Yes, sir; but people began to be afraid to trust me to sell them the medicines—although, indeed, they might as well have done so, because I always sold it right, and never meddled with anything that I didn't know all about. But they were afraid to trust a boy like me, sir; and they stopped coming; and that is all about it," said the child, sadly.

"But then you kept quite an assortment of perfumery, cutlery, brushes, and such things. You might have made something on the sale of those."

"Yes, sir," answered the boy, hesitatingly, "we had a lot of those things; but most of the people who wanted any of them, always came over here to you to buy. But still we did make some money by those that dealt with us as long as our little stock of goods lasted. But when it was all gone, we had no money to renew it."

"And so the business of the little shop is really gone?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, Owen, my poor fellow, don't be disheartened, I— Now, don't look so miserable, my child! You are too young to have such a care-worn face—"

"It isn't for myself, sir—it is for my mother!" said the boy, with a sob, that he could not entirely suppress.

"Well, I know that, my little man. But she will be taken care of. The cattle upon a thousand hills are the Lord's; and He is the God of the widow and of the fatherless."

"Yes, sir, I know. Mother often says so. But— you couldn't think of anybody that might want a boy to— black boots, or clean knives, or anything, could you, sir?" asked Owen, taking up the previous question.

"I could not, my lad; and neither do I think that blacking boots and cleaning knives would be a proper occupation for the son of the late Dr. Wynne."

"Oh, sir, I would do anything in the world that is honest to help her!" replied the child, with another suppressed and half heart-broken sob.

"Well spoken, my little man. Never fear but you will find proper employment, Owen. It is said that Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do. And it is certain that God finds work for willing hands. I will make inquiries, and if I can hear of anything that would be proper for you, I will let you know."

"Thank you very much, sir," said the boy, bowing politely, as he turned to leave the shop.

"Stay, Owen, if you please," said Lacy, calling him back, and at the same time taking a case of goods from the shelf.

"Yes, sir," replied Owen, hoping against hope that a prospect of work was dawning in Mr. Lacy's mind, and that he had called him back to tell him of it. But no, Mr. Lacy placed the case upon the counter, opened it, took from it a baby's white Berlin wool cloak, with hood attached, and held it up, saying:

"My boy, I always send my regular customers New Year's presents. And now I must send one to your mother."

And here let it be explained that the "New Year's presents" usually sent by Mr. Lacy to his other regular customers were neat envelopes containing his yearly bills for goods furnished them, together with respectful suggestions that prompt payment would be agreeable. But this New Year's present to the poor widow was to be quite another affair.

"Thank you very much, sir," said Owen, in reply to the dealer's kind words.

"I think I would like to send her this little cloak for the baby. I think it very pretty," said Mr. Lacy,

as he did up the cloak in a neat parcel and handed it to the boy.

"Thank you, sir," said Owen, as he received the parcel; but if you please, sir, for which of the babies is it?"

"For which? why, is there more than one?"

"Yes, please, sir, there are two little sisters."

Lacy looked surprised and perplexed, and after a little reflection exclaimed:

"Why, my lad, is it possible that your mother has kept that little foundling all this time?"

"She has kept the other little sister all this time, sir; but please don't call her a foundling, because she wasn't found, you know. And at home we call her the other little sister," said Owen, in a tender, deprecating tone, such as he always used in speaking of the poor babe that had been cast upon his mother's care.

"Then I hope the friends of the child pay your mother well for her trouble," said Lacy.

"I don't think the other poor little sister has any friends in the world but us; and that is why we like to take care of her, sir."

"What, Owen? Is it possible that your poor dear mother, in her feeble health and straitened circumstances, actually kept that babe for charity?" inquired Lacy, in surprise, and, if it must be said, in admiration.

"For charity? Oh, dear, no, sir! It is at the parourhouse where they take babes for charity, and the babes mostly die of it, folks say. Oh, no, sir, we keep the other little sister for love," said Owen, uttering, in his unconscious innocence, a severe sarcasm against the parourhouse.

"Give me back that parcel, my boy," said Mr. Lacy.

Owen yielded it up, wondering why the dealer recalled his gift.

Mr. Lacy had no intention of doing so. He only opened the parcel to add to it another little cloak, and then he returned it to Owen, saying:

"There, my lad, the first cloak I put in was for your own little sister; and the second is for the other little one; but as they are both exactly alike, it is hardly necessary to say anything about it."

"Oh, I do thank you so much, sir! so very, very much!" said Owen, earnestly, as he bowed, and once more turned to leave the shop.

He ran across the street in great glee, pushed open the door and ran into the back parlour, where his mother sat, nursing her own child, while "the other little sister" lay in the cradle with its fists in its mouth.

"Where have you been all the morning, my boy!" inquired Amy with a shade of anxiety in her tone.

"Oh, mother, looking for work! I couldn't find any; but Mr. Lacy has promised to look out and try to find some for me. And oh, mother! look here! look what beautiful cloaks Mr. Lacy has sent to the two little sisters for a new year's present!" he exclaimed, eagerly, unwrapping the parcel and displaying the cloaks.

Amy took them in her hands and looked at them half in pleasure, half in pain, as she said:

"They are very beautiful! And Mr. Lacy is very, very good. But I hate to accept such valuable gifts from him, or indeed from any one, Owen."

"Oh! but, mother, it seems to be his practice to send new year's presents to all his regular customers. So it is all right, you see."

"I doubt very much whether he sends such valuable presents as these to all his regular customers! And, besides, I am not a regular one, or at least not a very profitable one."

"Oh, mother, if you mean about his bill, he says that is of no consequence at all. And he told me to tell you he said so."

"He is very good, but of course he will want his money, sooner or later."

"It will be later, then, mother."

"I suppose," said Amy, looking at the cloaks, with satisfaction and desire—"I do suppose it would seem ungrateful to send them back. I suppose it would not be well to do so."

"Oh, no, no, no, mother dear! never do that."

"And then the children do want them so badly."

"Oh! yes, don't they, though? They hadn't a thing to wear out. And now, mother dear, you can take them to church to be christened, can't you?"

"Yes, darling, and I will do so, without more delay."

By this time Amy had taken one of the cloaks, and was trying it on her baby to see how it looked.

Owen watched the process awhile, and then he took up the other little one, and began to dress her in the other cloak, murmuring to her with infinite tenderness:

"You shall have your little cloak on, too! Owen will put it on for you."

"I think, Owen, that you love that child better than you do your own sister."

"Oh! no, I don't, mother dear. But this is such a poor little sister. And you don't love her like you do your own baby."

"It is not natural that I should, Owen; but I take care of her, and that is more than many others in my circumstances would do!"

"I know that, mother dear. You take care of her, and that is very good—very, very good. But you don't love her, and I rather think this poor little sister knows you don't love her."

"What makes you think so, Owen?"

"Oh, haven't I seen her put up her poor little lip to cry when you've looked at her so?"

"Looked at her how, Owen?"

"Oh! you know, mother, and so does she; but I can't describe it."

"I suppose I do look gravely on the child sometimes. It is when the thought crosses my mind that, but for her, my children would not be fatherless; but I do it involuntarily. Heaven knows I never mean to be unkind to the poor babe!" said Amy, compunctiously.

"She could not help what happened, mother dear. You could not help it, little May, could you? Look at mother, little May, and tell her so," said Owen, tenderly raising the child and holding her up to his mother.

Amy stooped and kissed the babe with so much real kindness in her sad eyes, that the little creature smiled, jumped, and crowed with satisfaction.

"See how grateful she is for a little love, mother dear," said Owen.

"You give her a good deal of love, Owen."

"Yes, mother dear, I will love her as long as I live—my little May!" said Owen, fondly.

Yes, it was true! Amy did not love the little creature that Providence had cast upon her care. Partly from compassion, partly from conscientiousness, and partly from a feeling that, if she should be good to this poor orphan, heaven would bless her own children, Amy took care of little May.

One word about the names that had been conferred upon these children. At first Amy had called her own child "my baby," and in speaking of her to Owen she called her "your little sister." But she called the other child always "the other baby." Owen called the first "little sister," and the second "the other little sister." But at length it had become expedient to distinguish them by other names—and so the child of Amy was called Gladdys, because that had been the name of Dr. Wynne's mother and favourite sister; while the child of "nobody" was called Mary, because that simple name was the first to occur to the minds of the family. But Gladdys was soon shortened to "Gay," and Mary to "May," and then the names were lengthened by the pet prefix "little," so that Gladdys became "Little Gay," and Mary became "Little May." Each name seemed to suit each child very well; for Gay was a lively, dancing, crowing infant, and May was a very quiet one. They had not yet received the rites of baptism, because Amy had no decent outer garments in which to present them at the altar. But that difficulty was now removed by the kindness of Mr. Lacy.

CHAPTER XXIII

A SURPRISE.

How goes the night in the widow's cot?
Are the blinds fast closed? Does the fire shine clear?
Are they working together? Is he forgot?
Edith May.

On the Friday of that week, after the house had been shut up for the night, the widow and her little family were gathered together in the back parlour.

The stove was burning brightly with the sticks that Owen had gathered in the woods.

One tallow candle stood upon the round table, on one side of which sat Amy, engaged in needle-work; while on the other side sat Owen, with his slate and books before him.

The two little sisters were put to bed for the night. In an obscure corner behind the stove stood Nancy kneading dough for the next day's bread.

While they were all thus employed, there came a rap at the outer door.

Amy dropped her work, turned pale and listened. Poor Amy, with her perpetually overhanging dread of duns, was always startled by every knock, whether it came by day or by night. And this knock was peculiarly startling from its coming at such an unusual hour of the night.

Owen pushed aside his books, jumped up and ran to open the door.

Amy held her breath.

There was a pleasant voice speaking; a short colloquy ensued; and then Owen re-entered the back parlour, saying:

"Mother, dear, it is Mr. Lacy. He wants to see you."

"I knew it—oh! I knew it would come at last. He wants his money, and I have not one shilling to pay him! After all his kindness to us, too! Oh, it seems so ungrateful, so dishonest, so unpardonable in me! Oh! what shall I do?" exclaimed Amy, clasping her hands, trembling, and growing paler than before.

"I, somehow, don't think it is that, mother," said Owen.

"Oh, yes—yes, it is! But ask him to come in, Owen. I suppose I must see him," said Amy, in desperation.

Owen left the room for a moment, and then re-entered, ushering in Mr. Lacy, who came bowing and smiling.

Amy arose trembling, leaned with one hand on the table for support, and so waited to receive him.

"I have to make you an apology for coming at so late an hour, Mrs. Wynne. But, in truth, I could not come earlier," said Mr. Lacy, advancing towards her.

"No, sir," faltered Amy.

"The fact is, that I had to wait until the shop was closed for the night."

"Yes, sir," answered Amy, quaking.

"I hope I have not disturbed you?" inquired Mr. Lacy, observing her agitated looks.

"Not at all. Will you sit down, sir?" said Amy, making a great effort to control herself in the presence of this dreaded creditor.

Mr. Lacy bowed, seated himself in the chair that had been recently occupied by Owen, pushed the boy's books and slate aside, leaned over the table towards Amy, and said:

"I called this evening on a little matter of business, Mrs. Wynne."

"Oh, I know—I know! I was expecting it. It ought to have been paid long ago, sir. And especially after your great kindness to us in sending us those beautiful cloaks for the children. And it should have been paid, sir, only that—that—"

"My dear Mrs. Wynne, what are you talking of? I have not come about my bill! I do not even know its amount yet. I have not even made it out. That can wait your convenience. It will not break me, if I never get it. Don't distress yourself about that. I am in no sort of hurry. I have come about quite another affair."

Amy looked up, with surprise, relief, and curiosity all blended in the expression of her wan countenance.

"Your son was over to my place a few days ago, and I learned from him that the business of your shop had rather fallen off."

"Rather? It is quite gone, sir," said Amy.

"As regards the dispensary, that is quite natural and unavoidable; but not so as regards the perfumery."

"Sir, our stock was exhausted."

"So I understood from your son. And also that you had not—that is to say you could not—I mean it was not convenient for you to renew it all at once," said Mr. Lacy, hesitatingly, for he was one of those who shrink from wounding in the least degree the feelings of the poor.

"We had no capital, sir," answered Amy, frankly.

"Well, but you have credit."

"Credit? Oh, no, sir! We are not known to the large wholesale houses; and even here our credit must suffer, I fear."

"Not at all. Well, Mrs. Wynne, to come to the point—I have a proposition to make to you."

Amy looked up again, rather in doubt this time. She had suffered so much, poor woman, that it was now habitual with her to fear rather than to hope.

"It is this, Mrs. Wynne: I have quite a fine stock of perfumery, cutlery, brushes, and so forth, which I really only keep for the accommodation of my customers, for they are not in the strict line of my business. Now I propose that you take the whole stock off my hands at the original wholesale price. You can make thirty-three and a third per cent. on the sales, and you can pay me the original cost when convenient. It will be a little start for this fine lad of yours; and you can gradually increase the business; for you will have no competitor in the village, as I shall not keep any more of those articles; and when my old customers inquire for them, I will send them over to you."

"Oh! Mr. Lacy—" Amy began; but emotion choked her voice, tears filled her eyes, and she covered her face with her hands.

"It is not necessary to say a single word. It is but fair that I should turn this little trade over to you. I do not wish to monopolize the business of the village. People must live and let live, you know," said Lacy, heartily.

"But how shall I thank you? What can I say to you? I was so frightened when you came in. I

thought that you had come to demand your just dues, as was but reasonable, and I trembled because I had no money to pay you. I had expected anger and reproaches, and, instead of that, you came with sympathy and help. Oh, I am poor and weak, but the Lord is strong and mighty; and may He greatly recompense you," said Amy, in a broken and tremulous voice.

"Now, my dear Mrs. Wynne, don't make so much of a trifle. What I do is only what any just man would do in my place. It is very little, and the only merit in it is that it is done willingly and gladly. You are one of us, and you must be thought of. It would be hard, indeed, that one lone widow in a prosperous village like this should be forgotten. I hope the time may come when such a thing as a poor man, woman, or child left to struggle on alone in the midst of a thriving community will be a mere tradition of the past, that the children of the future will not believe in," said Lacy, warmly.

"And that'll be the millinarium," muttered Nancy, in a low, sarcastic tone, as she kneaded her dough in the corner.

"And now, Owen, my lad," said Mr. Lacy, turning briskly towards the boy, "do you prepare your shop to receive the goods, and I will send them over to-morrow morning."

And before any one could answer him, Mr. Lacy shook hands with Amy and Owen, and left the house, without the slightest doubt on his mind that Amy and her little son would finally pay him—"the uttermost farthing of the debt."

"Well, now, that's what I call a real gentleman—every inch of him! I didn't use to think so! I didn't use to like Mr. Lacy at all. And I used to cut him up short whenever he would so much as ask after the family. But now I begin to perfectly adore him!" said Nancy, emphatically, as she moved to the oven to put her bread to bake.

Amy did not answer; probably she did not hear. She dropped her arms upon the table, bowed her head upon them, and wept.

Owen's arms were around her neck in an instant.

"What is the matter, mother dear?" he inquired.

"People are so good to me, Owen!" was all her answer, as she wiped away her tears and resumed her needlework.

As soon as supper was over that evening, Owen spoke up briskly:

"Now, Nancy, if you will let me have a bucket, I will go to the pump and bring some water, and heat it, and give the counter and the cases a good cleaning, to get them ready for the new stock."

Nancy complied with his request.

And Owen went diligently to work, and worked on to a late hour of the night, to prepare the shop for its new honours.

Early the next morning Mr. Lacy sent over the new goods. And Owen had a fine time arranging them in his clean cases.

This was Saturday morning, when many of the country people came in to the village to do their shopping.

And Owen had scarcely finished arranging the pretty and attractive fancy goods under their glass cover, before he was interrupted by the entrance of a customer.

It was a busy and a happy day for Owen. He never left the shop for a moment until the hour of closing, when he was called in to supper.

"Only think, mother dear!" he said, gleefully, "I have taken to-day three pounds! At this rate we shall make our fortunes."

"My poor boy, I do not wish to damp your hopes. But you must not be too sanguine, Owen. 'This is Saturday, you know—the very busiest day in the week, with shop-keepers. You must not expect to sell so much every day," said Amy, gravely.

"I know that, mother dear. I make allowance for that; but if we do not take even half as much money on other days—"

"You forget, Owen, love. Every penny of that money must be laid by as fast as it is taken, to pay Mr. Lacy. Yes, to pay him all not only for the stock of goods, but for the mourning we bought of him last summer."

"I know that, mother."

The next day being Sunday, Amy and her little son went to church as usual.

On entering their pew, the first object that met their eyes was old Mrs. Morley, the minister's wife, seated in the paragonage pew. This old lady had been confined to her house by a trifling though persistent indisposition of some weeks' duration. And this was the first Sunday of her return to her accustomed place.

At the close of the services Mrs. Morley, with the feeble step of age, came tottering towards Amy to speak to her.

"How do you do, my dear?" she said, holding out her hand, which Amy clasped. "I have been uneasy

'bout you and your little ones—very uneasy indeed, my dear; but now that I have got about again, I intend to call and see after you. How are you getting along, my dear?"

"Thank you, dear Mrs. Morley, our prospects are something better than they were at the close of the year."

"Ah! the new year is a renovator, always."

"I am very glad to see you again, dear Mrs. Morley."

"Yes, dear, I'm sure you are! And I am very glad to get out. I don't know how it is with other old folks; but as for me, the older I grow, the less I like confinement to the house, and the more I love the open air and bright sun—even in winter, dear, even in winter. Good-bye, dear; good-bye, Owen, my boy; try to be a comfort to your mother," said the old lady extending a hand each to Amy and her son.

"Oh, indeed I will try, ma'am," said Owen, earnestly.

"He does try, and is a great comfort to me," Mrs. Morley said Amy, tenderly.

"That's right! the Lord bless you both," said the old lady, pressing their hands, and then turning to receive her other friends, who were gathering around her with congratulations upon her recovery.

Amy and her son walked homeward through the deep snow.

"Now for the mutton broth and dumplings, mother dear!" said Owen, with the eagerness of a hungry boy, as they entered their own door.

It was ready to be taken up. And by the time Amy and Owen took off their garments, the dinner was steaming on the table.

The half-famished mother and son sat down and ate with a keenness of appetite unknown to those who "fare sumptuously every day."

Fortunately, the babies were both asleep, else Amy would have had little chance to eat her dinner in peace.

"How well they sleep!" she said at length.

"Don't they, though!" exclaimed Owen.

"Yes! and I reckon I know the reason, too," said Nancy, nodding her head.

"Oh, Nancy! I hope you haven't given them anything!" exclaimed the mother, in alarm.

"I ain't give them no physic, if you mean that. But you may be sure I took up some of this broth when it was well boiled, and before I put the vegetables in, and give them both as much as they could eat! And they've been sleeping like tops ever since."

"But—Nancy, was that proper food for such young children?"

"They are more than six months old, and it is the dead of winter time—not like summer, and altogether it is time they were fed. Look how much good it's doing to them! Look how they sleep! When did you ever see them sleep like this before?"

Amy looked, and saw that the proof was conclusive.

"They are satisfied now, they are. I know how to manage children. I didn't fetch up thirteen without losing one for nothing, did I? I know what I'm doing."

Amy, looking at the children, seemed to think it likely that Nancy did know what she was doing.

And the afternoon and evening passed in peace.

(To be continued.)

DEATH OF A YOUNG WIFE.—One of the fairest and most admired of last year's brides, Princess Christina, wife of Charles Bonaparte, has died of consumption, at Rome, having scarcely attained her twentieth year.

GARIBOLDI is to revisit this country in April or May next. He will go to Liverpool, Newcastle, Glasgow, and some other towns where he has private friends whom he much desires to see. Such, at least, is the settled programme.

AN ITALIAN PRESENT TO THE EMPRESS.—M. Nigra, the Italian minister, has made a present to the Empress Eugenie of a Venetian gondola, to navigate the calm waters of Fontainebleau. M. Nigra, besides being a diplomatist, is also a poet, and accompanied his present with a sonnet engraved in gold letters inside the gondola.

PROBLEM FOR GEOLOGISTS.—It is stated that about three weeks ago some quarrymen working at West Gifford quarry, the property of Earl Fortescue, while breaking a large mass of stone, found within it an immense rat, of great length from snout to tail, with whiskers six inches long. It is to be offered to the British Museum as an antediluvian curiosity.

A WORD ON BEES.—Hitherto the cultivation of bees in this country has been greatly neglected, and we are inclined to think that it must have greatly diminished of late years in comparison with what it was many years ago; but it was never practised in England to anything like the extent that it is abroad, partly no doubt from the scarcity of food in comparison with

more favoured localities in the south of Europe. A traveller in Spain somewhat more than a century ago speaks of a bee-keeper who had five thousand hives; and, considering the extreme rapidity with which they increase and multiply, and the abundance of food in that country, there is no improbability in the statement.

LADY VENETIA.

CHAPTER XXXI.

I will let the mask drop—yes!
I've full powers for a final settlement.
What now? Out with it, friend! Wrangel.

At length the valley was gained, and Baldoni began to reflect with some apprehension that his companion might hereafter remember the locality to which they were bound. He had no desire to place himself too completely in the power of his accomplice, lest the place in which his prisoners were confined might become known to others besides themselves.

As the night advanced a storm was evidently brewing, for the clouds chased each other rapidly over the heavens, and soon blotted out the light of both moon and stars.

The steward, who had taken the reins, took advantage of this to wind for several miles through roads that were familiar to him, that Tomaso might be deceived as to the distance they had travelled.

The thunder reverberated among the hills, the lightning flashed at intervals, and a few large drops of rain fell just as he drew up at the entrance of La Tempesta.

Baldoni had chosen his opportunity when Father Boniface was absent in a neighbouring village, where he knew he must pass the night; therefore he had nothing to apprehend from him.

He alighted, secured the bridle of the tired mule, and then, taking a key from his pocket, unlocked a side door, which led into the vestibule of the chapel. He entered alone, and proceeding directly towards the altar through the dense darkness, he unclosed the opening in the pillar, now become familiar to him from frequent use, and descended a few steps.

Groping about, he found the means of striking a light; and a lamp, which stood in a rough niche, was quickly ready for use. The reflection was cast upwards, and a faint glimmer fell in a pale line of light across the chapel walls, serving as a beacon to guide himself and his accomplice in the completion of their crime.

Leaving the door open behind him, Baldoni rapidly descended his steps, joined Tomaso, and said:

"All is ready. I will carry the young girl in my arms, and you must follow with the other. You are stronger than I am, and can bear a heavier weight. Follow the light, its glimmer will be sufficient to guide us."

With a few discontented mutterings at the charge given him, Tomaso reluctantly lifted the form of the man and prepared to follow Baldoni, who was already upon the chapel steps, carrying the light form of Lucia as easily as if she had been a child.

The darkness which reigned in the body of the chapel was so complete, that no details could be made out by the keen eyes of Tomaso, though he was determined to use them to the best purpose possible under the circumstances.

Burdened as he was with the helpless woman who lay in his arms without the power of motion, he could discover nothing which might hereafter furnish a clue to the spot in which he now found himself.

Suddenly the faint light was shrouded from sight, and the voice of Baldoni spoke:

"I am now at the head of a winding staircase."

And Tomaso could distinguish the aperture, though it was impossible to see how it was contrived. He cautiously entered it, and the passage wound downward—the steward bearing a lighted candle in the hand of his hat—till Tomaso began to think they would never find a landing-place.

At length a lamp, which had been left burning, appeared in sight, showing that they had reached the dreary bourn to which they were bound.

Baldoni strode through the smaller room, followed closely by his companion, and the two laid the shuddering prisoners upon a bed which had been placed in a corner of the larger apartment for their accommodation.

Tomaso looked around him with intense astonishment. The vault, with its rough walls, looked dreary beyond expression, yet it had evidently been prepared for the habitation of the two unfortunates, who had fallen into Baldoni's power.

Near the bed a small table was placed, on which stood two cups, a few loaves of bread, and several bottles of wine. There was also a pitcher of water, and a small basket filled with fruit. An iron lamp swung from the ceiling by a chain so firmly riveted

at both extremities as to forbid its removal, and two common chairs completed the preparations for the living death to which Baldoni had doomed the helpless Lucia and her friend.

Tomaso shuddered. He surveyed the gloomy den, and he tremulously said:

"They had better never wake than to come back to life in such a place as this. I say, Baldoni, what is to prevent them from going up those stairs and making a noise above that will betray you?"

"Come with me, and I will show you," was the brief response.

Taking the candle from his hand he passed into the next room and shutting the door, showing his companion that it fitted so perfectly that it was impossible to detect its locality, he said:

"This fastens securely on the inner side, and sharp as those two women are they will hardly be likely to discover where it is situated. If they did, they could never open it, and they might strike upon it till doomsday, without being heard above. I must return a moment and light their lamp. They have a week's supply of food, and they will see no one before that time elapses."

The more impulsive villain trembled at the thought of leaving two human beings to such a fate, but there was no thought of relenting, even in his heart. What he was paid to do he would accomplish at whatever cost of suffering to his victims. He had not the courage to return and look on them, so he stood behind the door till Baldoni rejoined him.

The steward closed the entrance, and shot the strong bolts placed at different heights before ascending. He extinguished the lamp at the foot of the stairs, and when they were within a few feet of the outlet he suddenly overturned the one that burned there, and at the same instant dropped the candle he carried from his hand, leaving them shrouded in utter darkness.

To the exclamation of dismay uttered by Tomaso he replied by lightly saying:

"Accidents will happen, so you must pardon my awkwardness. We are nearly at the top, and I can guide you safely enough. Follow me closely."

In a few moments they stepped upon the chapel floor, Tomaso heard the panel close and the sudden turning of a key, but he could see nothing. Baldoni took him by the hand and they made their way to the door in safety. The box belonging to the prisoners was placed in concealment, and Baldoni said:

"I will take from it such trumpery as they will need, and carry it to them when I make my next visit. The box I shall destroy, as it might come up as evidence against us."

"When is it you purpose to visit them again?"

"Every week I must supply food till it becomes necessary to remove them altogether. If they prove too troublesome, I can easily forget their existence, and no one will ever be likely to find them."

"Would you have them perish of starvation?" faltered his companion.

"If they refuse to listen to reason, I will—yes, I will do it."

"But that is going further than my master wished, and you are only serving his interests, Baldoni."

"Of course I am; for what interest can I have in getting these women out of the way? The old one is only put in as company for the other, and Lucia alone is of any value to us. When we have made the marquis pay roundly for keeping her from her inheritance we may as well leave her to her fate, that she may tell no tales, Tomaso!"

The man drew a long breath, and after a pause for consideration, slowly said:

"It will be the safest to do so, perhaps; but for the present it is better for our interests to protect her life. But you understand that as well as I do."

"Of course I do, and perhaps a little better. Now we will get to my house; and give you a bed to lie down on, for you must be tired enough after the jolting we have had over the long mountain roads."

In pursuance of his plan to mystify Tomaso as to the situation of the chapel, the steward struck into a road which led in an opposite direction from his own home. It was now raining heavily, and the thunder crashed almost incessantly. Taking a cross road which, at the distance of several miles, intersected one leading to the cottage, as day was faintly dawning he drew up in front of his own gate.

Exhausted with the fatigue of the last twenty-four hours, Tomaso was glad to refresh himself with a glass of wine, and to retire at once to his bed, where he slept till late in the day without interruption.

But after a few hours given to repose, Baldoni was again up, attending to his daily business.

He informed Pepita that her rival was safely disposed of, but did not reveal where.

With a scornful laugh, he then informed her of the new aspirant to her favour in the person of Tomaso. She smiled as she replied:

"His pretensions will not annoy me long, for I have made up my mind to visit Paris without delay."

To her father's look of astonishment she replied by developing her plans for the future; to which he at length assented, with the assertion that she had a long head, and he should like to see the person who could circumvent her in any matter which she undertook to accomplish.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Since
Our interests so run in one direction,
E'en let us have a thorough confidence
One in the other. Wallenstein.

LADY VENETIA's health was much benefited by the use of the mineral waters, and at the close of the season the young pair removed to Paris, where Count Vittorio occupied an establishment suited to his rank and fortune. This, his charming bride endeavoured to render the most attractive place to him even in that dissipated and luxurious city.

The efforts of Lady Venetia were untiring to secure the affections of her husband, and the wounded heart of the young man gradually opened to the conviction that he had drawn a prize in the matrimonial lottery.

The compassionate tenderness Vittorio had long cherished for the countess, assumed the place of deep affection; and he felt thankful that such happiness was reserved for him after the severe disappointment he had suffered.

He supposed that long ere this his father's marriage with the mercenary being he now believed Lucia to be, had taken place; and he fully believed that he had torn her image from his heart, to replace it with one infinitely more deserving to be loved.

The medical man who was called in gave Lady Venetia strong hopes that the heart affection from which she suffered might be entirely cured, and the remedies he ordered soon produced a beneficial effect upon her health. She did not go much into general society, but an agreeable and cultivated circle soon gathered around them, and both husband and wife felt that their "lines had been cast in pleasant places."

The first interruption that came to the serene contentment in which they lived, was occasioned by the shock of hearing of the sudden death of Count Angostino. In a short time this was followed by the awful calamity in which the marquis perished, and, for a season, Vittorio was overwhelmed with affliction.

Then it was that he felt all the sweet and womanly qualities of his bride. She shared his grief, while she tenderly sought to console it, and those days of sorrow knit their hearts together more perfectly than months of joyous companionship could have done.

The new marquis would at once have returned to his native home, but the health of his wife was too important to him to be trifled with, and her physician positively prohibited travelling or excitement of any kind, as either must undo all he had accomplished toward curing her malady.

To leave Lady Venetia in a strange city was equally impossible, and Vittorio was compelled to content himself with writing to the steward, and giving orders that every honour should be paid to his father's memory, and arrangements be instantly made to restore his paternal home to more than its original splendour before his return to Sicily.

In the letter of Baldoni, announcing the calamity which had occurred at the castle, was the following paragraph:

"The marriage of Lucia Ganazzi with the marquis was postponed by the sudden death of your brother, and in the expectation of making her his wife at some future time, your father made no provisions for her. She is now with Sister Maria, the lay nun who came to the castle with a recommendation from you, and was employed as an assistant to Father Boniface in his charitable duties."

"I wished Lucia to become the guest of my daughter, but she preferred going with her new friend, and I am informed that she has made an engagement to sing on the stage at Reggio."

When the marchesa read this, she asked:

"Who is this young girl, and how is it that I have not before heard her mentioned?"

Vittorio crimsoned with painful emotion as he replied:

"You forget, my love. You must have heard of the child my mother adopted, and reared as her own. She was ambitious and mercenary enough to aspire to fill the position once held by her benefactress. My father was very old, and Lucia's care was necessary to him, but she forfeited my respect and affection by accepting him."

The soft eyes of his wife were fixed on him with a questioning and penetrating glance. She asked:

"Why have you never spoken of her before, for I am positive that you have not done so? Her very existence was unknown to me until to-day."

"Then your father did not tell you of her—yet why should he have done so? He knew little enough of her, and that little not to her advantage. Oh, Venetia, concealment always brings its own punishment, and mine is now coming for the deception I practised towards you."

He saw her rapidly change colour, and clasping her tenderly to his heart, he spoke in tones of fervent affection:

"Do not become excited, my darling Venetia, and I will tell you what I have felt it base to withhold from you so long. I love you now deeply, tenderly, truly; you know it, love, for you know that I am no dissembler, and you have received every proof of affection from me. But there was a time when this fair syren at the castle held me in her hands; it was but a boy's preference, Venetia, and you are the cherished darling of a man's heart. Speak, my precious wife, and say that this late acknowledgment has not wounded you."

She had sunk back half fainting, and it was many moments before she was sufficiently calm to reply. She then spoke mere as if to herself than to him.

"She loved you, Vittorio, in spite of her consent to wed your father. I know it, for she came to me in a vivid dream just before our union. The face haunted me long, and the despairing voice in which she asked, 'Why have you taken from me my all?' rang in my ears for days afterwards. Oh! Vittorio, dearly as I love you, I regret that my happiness has been purchased at the expense of another."

"My dear Venetia, do not speak thus! Do you suppose that a girl who could accept the father of the man she had professed to love, merely for the sake of his position, is worthy of a regret from either you or me? I have no doubt that at this moment Lucia is overwhelmed with chagrin at the loss of the state she was ready to sacrifice herself to gain. But I have one duty to perform to her; I must vindicate the memory of my father by settling upon her enough to support her comfortably. She shall not go on the stage from necessity."

"That will be right, Vittorio. Save her from such a fate as that, if she is willing to be saved. Under other circumstances I would have offered her an asylum with me, for I often feel the want of a companion of my own age and sex."

The young Marquis hastily replied: "Lucia will be better in her native island, and the good sister under whose protection she is will take care that no evil happens to her. I shall write at once to Baldoni to carry out the often expressed intentions of my father to provide handsomely for her, but I hope never to look upon her face again; I have lost all esteem for her, and to you, my Venetia, my undivided love is given."

She placed her hand in his, and tenderly replied: "That assurance shall make me happy—shall keep my heart from doubting or mistrusting the love I have at last won. I now know that it was not mine in the beginning and much that I could not then understand is explained to me. I will not reproach you with the part you played, Vittorio, for if you had cast me off, I should have died; now I live and bloom in your lately awakened affection."

"My generous, noble wife!" exclaimed Vittorio, impulsively; "if I had not loved you before, I should from this moment of confidence have been devoted to you for life. I felt that I was deeply wronging you by not confiding to you the whole story before our marriage, but your father insisted that it was best to withhold it. I am now glad that I was guided by him, for if you had known all, I might have lost my bride, and the happiness she has brought me."

"Am I indeed all in all to you?" she wistfully asked. "Forgive me, Vittorio, but where so much is given, the heart asks something like an equivalent in return."

"And it is yours, Venetia. My respect, my unalterable devotion are yours alone. Lucia is nothing to me—has been nothing since the hour in which I learned her betrothal to my father."

The marquis believed that he spoke the truth. The quiet affection he now cherished for Lady Venetia was as different in its character as are the fervid beams of a tropical sun from the mild light of the moon.

He found tranquil contentment, the best and truest for happiness,—in the union he had formed, but with Lucy freed from the blighting charges of hypocrisy and ambition, he felt that a truer, higher life would have been his.

But she was unworthy of the affection he had given her, and the gentle being who had devoted herself to him should be the light and hope of his existence. He succeeded in convincing her of this, and Lady Venetia felt deep gratitude to him for the earnest tenderness with which he sought to remove from her mind all fears for the future.

A few weeks passed away, and one morning the

marquis came into his wife's boudoir with an open letter in his hand. He sat down beside her, and asked:

"Did you not speak the other day of needing a companion near your own age, Venetia? If you still wish it, I can procure one for you who has been known to me from childhood. She is a lively, bright creature, whose presence will enliven the home that has lately become so sad."

"Who is she, Vittorio? I shall be glad to welcome any friends of yours to the shelter of our roof, and if she proves an agreeable companion for me, it will be so much the better."

"You are very kind, Venetia, and this poor girl seems to need a friend just now. She has unfortunately offended her father by refusing to receive a suitor he approves, and is so unhappy in his house that she wishes to leave it for a season. Pepita Baldoni is the daughter of the steward of the Colonna estate, an old and faithful servant of my family, and I shall be glad to afford her an asylum till her father becomes more reasonable."

"Tell me about her," said the marchesa, with awakened interest. "I think her father must be very tyrannical to insist on her giving her hand to one to whom her heart is indifferent."

"It is certainly wrong, and I cannot understand how Baldoni has changed so much, unless Pepita has worn out his patience with her numerous flirtations. She is very handsome, and much admired, but until I received this letter from herself, I thought the old man too much devoted to her to cross her in anything. Would you like to read it yourself?"

Lady Venetia held out her hand for the letter, and glanced over the following words:

"COLONNA, November 25, 18—
"COUNT VITTORIO.—Dear Sir: In the sad strait in which I am placed, I apply to you as almost the only friend I have who can afford me assistance and protection."

"You are aware that Carlo Santani has long been a pretender to my favour, and until lately my father has seemed indifferent as to whether I accepted him or not. He has suddenly changed his mind, and he has laid his most positive commands on me to become Santani's wife without delay, and insists that preparations for my marriage shall be immediately commenced."

"After a severe struggle with myself, I decided on my course. I will leave his house sooner than be sacrificed to a man I can never love, and seek a temporary home beneath your roof. I feel assured that you will not refuse my prayer to be received as the attendant or companion of Lady Venetia; and when this reaches you I shall be on my way to Paris."

"When we meet, I will explain all that has happened here within the last few weeks, and tell you what great good fortune has happened to Lucia. I have no time now to enter into the details, for my father may surprise me at any moment, and take measures to prevent me from dispatching this."

"Your afflicted friend, PEPITA BALDONI."
"The poor girl seems very unhappy," said the marchesa, thoughtfully; "but I am sorry she has adopted such extreme measures. A clandestine disappearance from her father's house may greatly injure her; but since she is a dependent of your family, she is certainly entitled to our protection, and I promise to treat her with every degree of consideration. Does that satisfy you, Vittorio?"

"Thanks, my love; it is no more than I expected of your goodness. We will keep her with us till we return to Sicily, and then I will use my influence to reconcile her with her father, and find a more acceptable suitor for her than Santani. It is a pity, though, that Pepita cannot like him, for he is an excellent match for her in a worldly point of view, though I must confess that he is by no means attractive."

"Then she is not to marry him! I will order an apartment near my own to be prepared for her, and we will jointly do all in our power to console her for her father's harshness. I am glad she is coming to us, for she will be of use to me in many ways."

"Then it is settled. We may look for her at any hour, for this letter is overdue for several days."

"Tell me something of Pepita. Since she is to be my friend and companion, I wish to know something of her beforehand."

"She is a gay, brilliant and fascinating girl; singularly handsome, though of a type not attractive to me. But other men do not think as I do, for Pepita has a score of admirers among her own class. It is absurd in Baldoni to insist on her accepting a man that is distasteful to her, for she will be sure to marry well."

"Had you not better write to him as soon as she arrives, and, after letting him know that his daughter is safe under my protection, remonstrate with him for his cruelty towards her?"

"I will do all that is possible to bring about a reconciliation, be sure of that."

A handsome apartment was prepared for Pepita, and in four days after this conversation she arrived quite alone. She said no one had assisted her in her flight, and her father was quite ignorant of the route she had chosen. She was dressed in deep mourning for the late Marquis, and an appearance of the deepest depression was at first carefully sustained.

The young Marchesa received her with the tenderest consideration, and endeavoured in every possible manner to make her feel that she was welcome in the asylum she had sought. With bitter tears, Pepita improvised many scenes of violence as having passed between her father and herself, which proved to the sympathetic listener that it was impossible for her to remain with one who treated her with so little consideration.

The Marquis was sometimes present at these conversations, and at the earnest solicitation of Pepita he undertook to inform her father whether she had died, though she declared that no entreaties should induce her to return to his house till he pledged himself to persecute her no further on Santani's account.

She would not speak of Lucia herself, but waited for Vittorio to inquire concerning what she had to impart with reference to her. He felt a great unwillingness to do this, for Pepita knew too much of the past not to render it embarrassing to him to speak of Lucia in the presence of his wife. Finding that she would not refer to the promised communication, he at length summoned courage to ask:

"What has become of Lucia and her friend sister Maria? You said in your letter that some good fortune had happened to her."

"Oh! yes, I forgot. It is a romantic story; only think! her father was exiled, has made a large fortune in England, and sent for her to join him there. Sister Maria went with her, and it was fortunate for Lucia that he made known his existence at the time he did, for she had just accepted an engagement to sing at Reggio."

"Is it possible!—and why has her father kept her so long in ignorance of his existence? It was a cruel piece of neglect on his part."

"Signor Rispoli wrote to my father and explained all that. He hoped to obtain his pardon, and return to his native land; but it seems that he was engaged in a conspiracy against the government, and all the efforts made in his favour were unsuccessful. When at last convinced of this, he wrote to Lucia to join him in London. He has, by some means, known all along that she was under the care of your mother, and was receiving the training of a lady."

"Then she is really gone?"

"Yes—she had just reached Reggio when the news came to her, and she immediately forfeited her engagement with the manager, and embarked for Palermo, accompanied by the nun. They found there an English vessel, which sailed for Liverpool."

"Do you know whether Lucia was happy in the thought of being forever severed from her native island?"

"My father saw her before she embarked, and he says she was claimed with the new prospects opening before her. You know she is ambitious, and with her beauty, and her father's fortune, she may take a high position. That will satisfy her more completely than anything else, as you should know from her conduct with regard to your father."

"That is true," he vaguely replied. "I am glad that she is prosperous, and I hope she will be happy in her own way. Can you tell me who her father is? What position did he once hold? Do you know enough to furnish a clue to that?"

"I am certain the name he bears is a feigned one, but I believe he was not a person of much importance. Very little is known of him beyond the fact that he became embroiled with the government, but finally effected his escape to England. I am surprised that Lucia did not write to inform you of the change in her prospects, but she must have been so elated at this piece of good fortune and the thought of meeting with her father, that she forgot her old friends."

"There was no reason why she should write to me," Vittorio coldly replied. "Beyond the fact of knowing that she is placed above want, I have no further interest in her. I may as well tell you now, Pepita, that Lady Venetia is aware of that passage in my life, and fully appreciates my motives for inquiring into Lucia's fate. Is it not so, my love?"

The Marchesa smiled faintly, and bent her head in assent.

"So-o," thought Pepita, "there is one arrow gone from my quiver. Since I cannot strike her heart through Lucia, I must use other and more certain means."

She arose, and asked permission to withdraw, as she had not yet recovered from the fatigue of her journey to Paris; but she only required solitude, that she might plot mischief against those who had so kindly received her.

(To be continued.)



ALETHE.

CHAPTER XII.

"ALETHE," said Miss Rainbold, when Bracegirdle had gone, "you have a secret! Share that secret with your too-indulgent mistress."

The girl was silent.

"Alethe, have I been unreasonable with you in my wild and imperious moods?"

Mellicent's voice was very persuasive. Alethe lifted her hand.

"You have been as a sister and a friend. You have held me with silken fetters. My bondage has not been irksome."

She crossed her arms upon her breast, looked down, and sighed.

Mellicent stroked her dark hair.

"Speak, Alethe!"

"My mistress, nothing should be hidden from you. Come with me. Do not be afraid; we will not go far. You see that patriarchal bayuan-tree? That shall be the end of our walk."

Alethe preceded her mistress to the tree.

"This tree," she said, "is the parent of my secret. It is hollow. By pushing the tall grass aside, an opening may be found at the root. Suspecting the honesty of Hyderabad, I set Hafiz to watch him; and when Hafiz could not watch him, I watched him myself. Observing Hyderabad walking here one day, in a very bad temper, on account of some words I had said to him, I hid myself inside this patriarch, and had not been there a great while when I heard a conversation that well repaid me for my trouble. This conversation took place between Hyderabad and the young Englishman who came hither to woo my mistress."

"Go on," said Mellicent, nervously.

"Their discourse concerned Kavanagh, of whom Bracegirdle was intensely jealous. He bargained with Hyderabad to remove him from his path."

"This seems incredible!" exclaimed Mellicent.

"The bargain was easily made. For one thousand rupees he was to drop into the wound a poison so penetrating that it would, in due time, produce death!"

"I see—I partly—" said Miss Rainbold.

"I wished to thwart this crafty villain in my own way. Knowing of one very learned in the mysteries of drugs and poisons, I lost no time in seeking him—a journey that never could have been accomplished without the aid of Mr. Barnabas and his elephant. By the blessing of God I reached the hut of the solitary, and procured the antidote."

"The details of the adventure I will relate to you

[ALETHE'S SECRET.]

at some future time, for the undertaking was not unattended with danger. I had warned the young sahib, before setting out, not to have Hyderabad approach him, or touch his arm, but when I returned the mischief was done. Hyderabad had stolen in while he slept and dropped the deadly agent into the wound. His condition this morning you can yourself call to mind. I had supposed nothing would transpire before morning, and was shocked and alarmed at what I beheld. You know what followed. You saw the wily Hyderabad come in. You heard the words of Kavanagh concerning Mr. Barnabas, and what he said when he came in, he having been instructed by me. My mistress, behold this phial!" She held up the serpentine phial. "It sparkles in the red rays of the sinking sun like a hundred diamonds!"

"Truly, girl, it is like concentrated white flame. And so you dropped a drop of this glittering fluid into the wound?"

"I dropped it into the wound, my mistress, and the sahib lives."

"It is most wonderful! Why was this kept from me?"

"Why does anything happen that happens? Why did Hyderabad come? Why did your lover come? Why are all things as they are? Because it is the will of God!" replied Alethe, with humility.

"A strange reason, but perhaps a good one. My impatient and impulsive nature might not have been able to practise the necessary restraint." Mellicent paused, then laid her right hand on the girl's breast. "Alethe!" she said. Her accents were melancholy.

"My mistress!" responded Alethe.

"Answer me this question. Do you hear me, Alethe?"

"I hear you, mistress."

"Answer this question, and answer it truly: Does Ida Macgregor—does Ida Macgregor—"

Mellicent's voice failed her.

Alethe kissed her lips, and answered:

"Yes, sweet mistress, Ida loves him!"

Mellicent threw her arms around the girl's neck and sobbed like a child. Alethe felt the hot tears raining on her cheek. She drew the exquisite head nearer and nearer, kept her soft lips on the white forehead, and tapped the smooth cheeks continuously with her little hand. There was ineffable balm in the silent ministrations of the girl. Never, never had Mellicent realized the inestimable treasure of human sympathy. She clung to Alethe as if every hope and every happiness was in her.

The girl knew the mockery of words, and did not interrupt this passionate outburst of emotion.

She permitted her to weep on unrestrained. The paroxysm gradually passed; the tears ceased to flow; the sobs melted to sighs; and the sighs became lengthened respirations.

She was presently calm again. Embracing Alethe tenderly, she looked at the setting sun, and said, with composure:

"It is time to return. But before we go back, let me see you enter the hollow of this tree. Really, my friend, it seems impossible that this apparently solid trunk could contain a human being."

"You shall see!" cried Alethe, smilingly, and pushing away the grass, disappeared so suddenly that Mellicent doubted the evidence of her eyes.

No sooner had the girl entered, than, with a terrified cry, she sprang out.

"Hafiz! poor Hafiz!" she cried, wringing her hands. "This is the reward of his faithfulness. This is his recompense for his devotion to me!"

"What is the matter?" asked Mellicent. "You are shocked and terrified."

"The poor youth," cried Alethe, "will never watch more. He is dead, he lies cold on the ground. He has been discovered and slain. I stumbled over his body; I touched his face: it was the face of a corpse. Hafiz! poor Hafiz!"

"Grieve not, Alethe. The sin of his death is not yours. Fortunately, here comes my father. His face glows with kindness."

"Waiting for another tiger, girls," cried the Major, "or have you set your caps for a Thug?"

"Father, hasten! Some one has killed Hafiz."

"Killed Hafiz! Where is he?" said the major, with a self-possession quite at variance with the agitated feelings of Mellicent.

"In this tree, which is hollow. Here is the entrance. There may yet be life in him. Have some one to take him out," she answered, in a flurry of excitement.

"If he's dead, how can there be any life in him? Take him out? Can't I pull him out myself? Bless you, I've carried a wounded man, weighing two hundred and fifty pounds, right up out of a trench, without puffing an atom. Just put my hand on one of his heels, and see if he won't come out—that is, if the leg holds."

The resolute major, without more ado, flung his military cap on the ground, and getting on all fours, plunged into the hole like a bear into his den, and presently backed out, dragging poor Hafiz.

"Dead!" quoth the major. "I should like to know what business the boy has to be dead! Well, girl, what have you got to say about this? Who

killed him? Who tucked him in here? In the next place, how did you know that he was killed and tucked in here? This comes of woman's inquisitiveness, I s'pose. If you hadn't been inquisitive, you wouldn't have known anything about it, and I shouldn't have had my feelings hurt!"

"Alethe was showing me the hollow in the tree," replied Melicent, "when, to her horror, she felt a dead body."

"That's just the way! If there's anything disagreeable, that girl is sure to find it out. If she'd minded her business, nobody would have been shocked, and Hafiz would have slept in the patriarch," growled the major.

"This is very sad. Look at him, father!"

"I am looking at him. Can't see stab nor shot. A person ought to be stabbed or shot! If he isn't, he has no right to die a violent death."

"Look at his neck," said Alethe.

"Bless my body!" exclaimed the major, "here's a regular welt round the neck. The poor lad died by a cord!"

"A Thug!" exclaimed Alethe.

"A Thug!" gasped Melicent.

"A Thug!" vociferated the major, somewhat awed. "This accursed country ought to be sunk; and I'd sink it if I had the management of it. If you want to kill a person, shoot him, stab him, hang him, but don't put a string round his neck."

The major ground his teeth together, and shook his fists in the air. His honest nature was aroused. He wanted to draw his sword and immolate somebody. He wished all the Strangers in India had but one neck, and he had that neck between his thumb and finger.

Would he wring that neck?

CHAPTER XIII

ALETHE only knew the manner in which Hafiz had met his death. It was evident to her that he had hidden himself in the tree to observe the movements of Hyderabad, and he had, unhappily, been discovered, and strangled by the crafty native. With her knowledge of the circumstances, this seemed a natural and probable solution of the subject.

The major gazed at Hafiz a long time. The purple track around his neck filled him with peculiar horror. He thought of Ida, and was more than ever grateful for her deliverance from a like fate.

"Where in Hyderabad?" he asked, abruptly.

"Neither Melicent nor Alethe could answer this question."

"I haven't seen him since morning. I must shoot him at a venture. Or, if I had a few faithful Sepoys, hanging would be better. But Sepoys can't be trusted now," sighed the major. "Nobody is to be trusted now." He pointed to the body of Hafiz. "We have secret enemies in our midst. Satan is in our own household. Those who eat from our plate and drink from our cup deceive us. How long shall these things be?"

"Is there no way of escape from this dreadful country?" asked Melicent.

"We are hemmed in on every side, my child. There is a circle of fire around us. India is abandoned to rapine and murder. The sword of the avenging Sepoy waves warningly over our heads. I can no longer conceal from you that we are not safe for a day—not even for an hour. There have been dreadful doings at Cawnpore and Delhi. The revolted natives are prowling through the country like hordes of ravenous tigers. The European residents are being swept away with fearful haste. The circle narrows upon us. One of our servants, whom I can yet rely on, brought me tidings this afternoon of new inhumanities. The infuriated wretches are surging in this direction. They may be here to-morrow—they may be here to-night. It is of you and Ida that I think."

"Would not the Government, if it knew your situation, send some soldiers to your relief?" asked Melicent.

"If they were native soldiers, my poor girl, our danger instead of being lessened would be increased; for the Sepoys still in the service of the Government cannot be trusted out of sight of their masters. They will not fight their brethren without a regiment of British troops behind them. We can neither reach the little garrison at Cawnpore nor the heroes besieged at Lucknow. Here we are, about as helpless as possible. Neal Kavanagh has got himself wounded by a tiger, and lies on his back in a miserable state; and there's nobody to fight but Braecigirdle, and myself."

"Don't count much on Braecigirdle," said Melicent.

"Ah! he's *hors de combat*, is he?" Major Rainbold laughed. "Wounded, is he, by those two howitzers of yours? Can't carry the works—can he? The dog hasn't mettle enough. When I was a young man of his age, I wouldn't have abandoned a besieged fortress on any

account. I'd lay under the walls six months, carrying my lines of circumvallation nearer every day! I don't believe the boy knows how to work his batteries."

"Nor will he ever learn," replied Melicent, seriously.

"Isn't he good at a short range, eh?"

"He's good at nothing," interposed Alethe, "but bad at everything."

"Come, come," replied Rainbold, pleasantly, "her own cannonade is enough. She shall have no reinforcement. Raynor shall have fair play, and if he can make a breach and storm the citadel, like a gallant fellow, let him do it. Don't you open fire on him, girl. If you do, I'll take you in hand myself."

"My mistress will never strike her flag to him," muttered Alethe, tossing her head.

"This is against all authority and discipline. I tell you the siege shall go on by regular approaches, and nobody shall meddle or make."

"Father," answered Melicent, with emotion, "you are fatally deceived in Raynor Braecigirdle. I regret to tell you that he is utterly unworthy of your friendship, trust, and hospitality. He has neither principle nor magnanimity, honour nor candour."

They were walking toward the house. The major stopped and looked searchingly at his daughter.

"These are grave charges," he said; "but you are a girl of sense, Melicent. If Raynor had committed murder you couldn't speak much worse of him. He is the son of an old friend. Don't talk ill about the son of an old friend unless you have reason."

"Father," returned Melicent, smiling tenderly, and taking her father's hand, "the son of an old friend deceived you! Raynor Braecigirdle and that dark spirit, Hyderabad, are leagued together in evil. But for Alethe, your brave and generous friend Kavanagh would now be past recovery."

They had reached the verandah, and Barnabas Hutton came out to meet them. His ready ears caught the concluding words of Melicent.

"Right, Miss Rainbold, right. I'm glad Alethe's told ye about it, and that you've got courage enough to tell your father, without regard to consequences. The truth is, major, the critter tried to pizen the lieutenant jist out of jealousy and spite, and wickedness generally. But he didn't quite do it. You see that little gal, don't ye, major?" He pointed at Alethe, and his face beamed all over. "You see that sample of eye, don't ye? Well, 'twas that sort o' material that was on hand, and took the wind out o' his sails. I ain't a profane man, major, but I've no objection in uniting with ye in saying devilish!"

"Devilish!" repeated the major, setting his teeth harder.

"Devilish!" echoed Barnabas, with becoming spirit. "Yes, he tried to pizen him. He dropped some kind o' compounded stuff into that tiger wound, which went into his system like the knockerloration of small-pox. You wouldn't suppose that an animal so big as Methuselah should have anything for to do with so small a thing as a drop of pizen; but he did! And he had some'to do"—he glanced archly at Alethe—"with something a little larger nor a drop o' pizen, and a wonderful deal more wholesome."

"Tell me how the boy is now," interrupted the major, in a great heat.

"He's all right," responded Barnabas with unwonted energy. "But he couldn't have been all right if it hadn't been for her."

"Confound it; will you try and get at something?" blurted the major.

"We're getting at the pizen, and the anecdote to the pizen, about as rapid as an elephant can trot. Pizen and anecdotes go together, you know, like a man and his wife; which allers neutralizes each other, and counteracts each other in every way, shape, and nature." "Bring out Methuselah," sez she. So I brought him out. 'Make him kneel,' sez she. So I made him kneel. Then we scrambled on his back, and scuttled away like fury after the anecdote, though mind ye, I hadn't no more idee that I was goin' for an anecdote than nothin'. We whisked along astonished. There wasn't nothin' but one blur o' jangles afore our eyes. I can't tell how many tigers, lions, and other animals we run down on the way; 'twixt a hundred wagin-loads, probably."

"Can't you get along a little faster, Mr. Hutton?" queried the major, who preferred practical facts to immaterial details.

"I'm goin' as fast as the elephant can get over the ground. As I was sayin', on we went, at elephantine speed, till we come to the hut, cave, or den, where the great Moonshie burrowed. We alighted from our conveyance, and Alethe popped in upon the Moonshie, and was out o' sight a good spell. Presently I heard a little scream—the prettiest little scream that ever come to my ears—and was mighty anxious."

"Push in, Methuselah," sez I, and he crushed the door immediate. Springin' in, I see—

"You need not tell what you saw, Mr. Barnabas,"

interrupted Alethe. "I rather you would not tell what you saw, Mr. Barnabas."

"Jest as you say, miss; it's all the same to me," said Hutton. "So we'll slur over the cord business, and come to the gray-bearded old Moonshie at once, who was proper loth to give up the anecdote, or counter-pizen, and it was only by threatenin' him with death by Methuselah that we succeeded eventually in gittin' a little crooked bottle, about as big round as your darter's smallest finger, and as white."

"You've made a needlessly long story of it, Mr. Hutton. You might have said that you went somewhere and got an antidote applied in time, which counteracted the poison, saved Kavanagh's life, and ended the whole thing in three sentences," retorted the major. "You want the bluff brevity of a soldier!"

"Hold on, major! Stick your sword there. Wasn't you two hours, yesterday, workin' in ditches, trenches, handlin' scallin'-ladders, and mountin' breaches, and makin' racket enough with musketry and artillery to stun a nation, when you might a said, 'I took the fortress,' which would have told the story in four words."

"You're an honest man, which is more than I can say of anybody here but myself."

The major drew a couple of revolvers from his pockets, and began to examine them.

"What are you goin' to do with them, major?" asked Barnabas.

"If you're a brave man, I shouldn't think you'd ask!" retorted Rainbold, tartly.

"All right, major!" said Hutton, nodding his head, knowingly. "That's right. I wanted to go into business promiscuously this mornin'; but the gal wheedled me out on't. The gals can do most anything with me. I allers succumb to muslin and eyes. Eyes, mind ye!" He glanced at Alethe with unusual significance. "There was allers eternally a soft streak in my character. I wish to heaven folks could be made without soft streaks in their characters."

Barnabas mused on that subject a moment. Then, said to the major:

"You'll shoot, of course? But it's too easy for such a rogue. Can't you call one or two of the natives, and run him up somewhere? There's plenty o' trum, you know."

"No, Mr. Hutton, I cannot hang him. He is the son of my friend!"

Major Rainbold grew very thoughtful. Another feeling mingled with his anger. He began to doubt whether he could shoot the son of his friend. There was a painful struggle within him. Barnabas perceived it.

"Major," said he, gravely, "I see how it is with you. You can't do it! No, you can't! There's a notion of honour inside of you that is stronger than your just resentment. I'll take the matter off your hands. He is not the son of my friend; and I thank my stars for it! What's he fit for, major? Is he fit to live? He isn't. Is he fit to die? As fit as he'll ever be, if he goes on as he's begun. The quicker he's destroyed, the better man he'll die. So, if I find him, I'll jist say to him: 'Mister Braecigirdle, you and I are to have a shootin'-match. Take this revolver or this 'un, for they are loaded precisely alike, and hold six shots apiece, and station yourself yonder, and when I've counted three, blaze away at me, and do your best to hit me, for I shall hit you, you may depend on't!' Words to that purport I shall use."

Hutton had taken the pistols from Rainbold, and stood with them in his hand as quietly and composedly as if the purpose he meditated was an everyday affair.

"If you propose to treat the villain in this manner," said the major, "you'll do him too much grace, and put your own honest life in jeopardy."

"Life," returned Barnabas, "is allers in danger. Neither you nor I can git out of this world till we've wanted in another."

"You but waste time," said Alethe; "I saw the Englishman ride from the bungalow half an hour ago. A rogue must be caught before he can be punished."

"Go in, children," said the major, kindly. "Mr. Hutton and I must put our wits together and devise, if possible, a method of warding off the many dangers that beset us. Flight may at any moment become necessary; and heaven only knows where we can fly for safety."

Melicent and the girl entered the bungalow, and the major and Barnabas passed to and fro in the verandah, conversing earnestly.

CHAPTER XIV.

SUDDENLY Barnabas Hutton sprang from the verandah and ran swiftly toward the jungle. The major, surprised at the action, followed at a slower

pace; but had not proceeded far when he heard a pistol-shot, speedily followed by another.

Barnabas reappeared in a moment.

"I caught a glimpse of our man," he said, "as I stood in the verandah. He was mounted on his horse, riding moderately along. I ran after him as you see, thinking it was a good time to settle this matter. When I got down there by the palm-trees, I caught sight of him again. He was settin' on his animal, a talkin' with two wild-lookin' men. I called to him to come to me on particular business; instead o' which he turned tail and started off at a gallop, when I sent a couple o' shots after him, just as an intimation of my good will, and to keep him at a proper distance; for I tell you, major, the further he is from you and yours the safer you'll be."

"I am of the same mind," answered Rainbold. "To tell you the truth, I am greatly astonished at my own blindness respecting the son of my friend."

"I'll tell you, major, where the mistake was; you took him on trust. If he'd been the son of somebody you knew nothing about, you'd have had your eyes open. I'll be bound."

"Exactly," said Rainbold. "We are oftener deceived by other people than ourselves. One ought to follow the dictates of his own common sense, instead of taking for granted what remains to be proved."

Rainbold had scarcely concluded this sage observation when six Sepoys, with musket at shoulder, and pistol and dagger at side, defiled from the trees in the direction of the usual approach to the grounds, and marched with a very soldier-like air to the front of the bungalow, where, seeing the major, they saluted him in military style.

"Keep close to me, Barnabas!" whispered Rainbold, whose surprise was only equalled by his distrust. "Keep close to me, for there's no knowing what these fellows mean." Then stepping forward and returning their salute, he said: "What brings you here, my fine fellows?"

"Major," answered one of the sepoy, respectfully, "your friend, General Havelock, sent us to you; thinking, in these troubled times, you might want us." "The general was ever a warm friend and a considerate officer," replied Major Rainbold, disguising his suspicions. "In what condition did you leave Cawnpore?"

"Closely besieged," replied he who had spoken. "It being closely besieged, how did you leave it?" asked the major, carelessly.

"May it please you, sah, we have not been in Cawnpore," said the sepoy, touching his cap. "General Havelock is on his way to relieve the suffering garrison; and knowing the deeds that are daily done by the mutinous and disaffected, and that you were not a moment safe, despatched us to you with all haste. It was a difficult matter, major, to elude and deceive our desperate countrymen; but, by the will of God, here we are."

"Very fine martial fellows, too!" said the major, shaking hands with the spokesman of the party. "If I was able to take the field again, I should want no greater honour than to command a regiment of such straight, soldier-like boys. To the right face! March under to the quarters of my lazy louts, and tell them it is my order that you have the best that can be found, both to eat and to drink."

The sepoy walked like automaton toward the huts of the servants. Rainbold watched them till they disappeared.

"What do you think, Mr. Hutton?" he asked. "Is this a blessing or otherwise?"

"Major," answered Barnabas, "it don't seem to me all right. It don't. No. That General Havelock should think of a wounded officer some thirty miles distant, while surrounded by those yaller devils, and not a man to spare, fightin' his way foot by foot towards Cawnpore, is someat to me that isn't quite clear."

"You speak my own doubts," said Rainbold, in a troubled tone. "In those men who have just left us I have not a particle of faith. My poor girls—my poor girls! Barnabas—" he held out his hand to Hutton, and his voice quivered—"they must not fall into the hands of the Sepoys."

"Heaven, in its infinite goodness, forbid!" exclaimed Barnabas, with more feeling than Rainbold had given him credit for. "I'd sooner shoot 'em with this right hand, than see 'em thus abused—than see 'em thus abandoned to degradation, and shame, and cruelty. Terrible!"

Hutton was so inspired that his manner was really dignified and noble.

"It were indeed a mercy to give the dear creatures death to save them from outrage. And if worst comes to worst, I will trust in you, my friend. I could not do it. The ineffable love that is within me would turn the weapon sooner upon myself," said Rainbold, solemnly.

"Major," cried Barnabas, with a tear on his cheek, "you're a trump! I'll stand by you, my hearty,

'till all is blue. Sink me if I don't draw my sword, and hack, gash, slash, and chop for you, as long as I can move a muscle. And not for you only, but for them, you know. For them. Them is too tender, and sweet, and handsome, to be clapperclawed by such sooty devils, mustn't be. Yes! I see where you are, Major Rainbold. I'm glad I'm here to help ya. As soon as them critters have ate and drank, station 'em one in a place, at different pints, within a given distance of the bungalow. There's only six of 'em at the most, and in partin' 'em you destroy their strength. The story about bein' sent by Havelock hasn't a word o' truth in it. Scatter 'em about in this way, and leave the rest to Barnabas Hutton and his elephant."

"Ah, that elephant," said the major, thoughtfully. "The same!" replied Barnabas, with pride. "Methuselah is worth a dozen Sepoys, any time. I have only to whisper in one of his large ears to make him know what's wanted. He's docile with his master, but mistrustful of strangers. His rage is terrific. Play him a trick, and see if he don't remember it. If I should say to him, 'Methuselah, pull down this bungalow,' he'd tear it to bits afore you could bring out your rupees. Major, Methuselah shall go the rounds to-night."

Barnabas took Rainbold by the sleeve, and added: "If you should have to take to your heels, he'll carry you and yours with as much speed and safety as a steamboat or a railway train. Now, my friends, go in and load all your firearms, and leave me outside awhile."

"Mr. Hutton, I like your advice so well that I shall follow it." So the major went in, leaving Barnabas to take such precautions as his sharp wit would suggest, and to give warning if danger seemed near.

(To be continued.)

WOMAN AND HER MASTER.

By J. F. SMITH, Esq.,

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CHAPTER CXXXVI.

Where law has no right,
Let it be lawful that law has no wrong.

Shakespeare.

"SOME reason in that," thought the landlord, as he left the room to send one of the waiters with the message. "Should like to have known it, for all that! Arrest—pooh! Don't believe a word of it!"

The traveller was seated, or rather reclining, upon the hard horse-hair covered sofa when the lawyer was announced. His fatigue disappeared in an instant—he rose to receive him.

"Mr. Jolland, I presume?"

"At your service."

There was a pause; the two gentlemen eyed each other not suspiciously, but as men of the world measure those whom they have to deal with, before commencing the encounter. The result as far as the man of law was concerned was favourable: he was a tall, gentlemanly-looking person, about forty-five or, at the most, forty-eight years of age, well dressed, perfectly at his ease, possessed of a shrewd, but not cunning eye; the expression of his countenance rather open than otherwise.

"Before proceeding to business," said his new client, "will you permit me to ask you a question?"

The gentleman nodded assent.

"Are you in any way engaged or connected—politically, of course, I mean—with the Earl of Moretown?"

"Certainly not," replied Mr. Jolland; "mine is the opposite party; and, to be candid with you, I feel but little interest in his lordship, who at the last election behaved, I must say, in a manner that—"

"Enough, sir," interrupted the querist; "I am perfectly satisfied. We will at once proceed to our affair."

Many were the surmises in the hotel as to who the traveller was, and his business in Newcastle. Rumours of a dissolution of Parliament were already rife. The consequence was that some set him down as a new candidate come to canvass the borough. As for the story he had told of his desire to arrest a debtor, not a creature, from the landlord downwards, believed a word of it.

After a consultation of two hours, the bell of the private sitting-room rang.

"Well," inquired one of the newsmongers, as the waiter returned from answering it, "what does he want?"

"Mr. Jolland wants his clerk!" replied the man; "that's all!"

The clerk came, and another half-hour passed before the bell rang again. This time the gentleman required his dinner—which the lawyer shared with him: on the strength of which fact it was universally reported

that there was to be a contest for the country—that Mr. Jolland had deserted his old party, and gone over to the blues.

That same evening, when the mail drove up to the door of the hotel, two sheriff's officers were observed anxiously regarding the passengers both inside and out. Not finding the party they were in search of, they retired.

But even this proof did not satisfy the gossips of Newcastle. Several shook their heads and laughed. Others declared that it was an excellent blind—but too stale to deceive them. It would not do—so determined were they that their version of the stranger and his affairs should prove the correct one.

The next day Goliath left the Queen's Head on his return to town. His new acquaintance accompanied him. In their way they passed through Durham, where Mr. Jolland, who was well known in that ancient city, stopped for a short time to transact some business with the sheriff.

That done, they resumed their journey, but stopped at the first stage on the road to York. Two men, who had arrived a few minutes only before them, touched their hats to the lawyer as he alighted.

"Have you got the writ all right?" he inquired.

The bailiffs—for such they both were—produced the magical slip of parchment.

"Keep a sharp look out!" he added.

"All right, sir!" said the man; "you may rely upon us—have been at the business ever since we were boys!"

"Possibly!" observed Goliath; "but the party you have to deal with, although a female, is exceedingly clever—will persuade you to anything!"

"If she persuades herself out of our hands when once we have made the capture, I'll forgive her!" replied the officer, with a laugh. "Don't be alarmed, sir: my ohum and I are too old to be easily tricked—ain't we, Jem?"

"I should think so!" rejoined his companion.

The two officers continued to loiter about the yard of the village inn till the arrival of the mail. The instant it drove up they were at the door. The only inside passengers were Mrs. Attey and an old Quaker gentlewoman, whom she had been annoying by her vulgar manners and conversation.

"Please to alight, marm!" said the senior bailiff. "Wait till I get to Durlam!" replied the nurse, deeming the speaker one of the servants of the inn.

"Can't wait, if you please, marm!"

"What does the fellow mean?"

"You must get out now!" continued the man. "I have a writ against you for four thousand pounds!"

"A writ against me!" repeated the astonished nurse. "Nonsense! Don't owe a shilling in the world—it's all a mistake!"

"Of course it is—not the least doubt of it! Is there, Jem?"

This was addressed by the speaker to his companion, who answered it with a knowing wink.

"I tell you!" exclaimed the enraged virago, "that my name is Attey—that I belong to the Earl of Moretown's household—and I'll have you both severely punished if I hear any more of your impertinence! Here! Guard!—coachman!"

In her indignation, Mrs. Attey leaped from the vehicle—the very thing her captors wanted her to do. Snap—the principal bailiff—touched her on the shoulder, at the same time showing the writ again.

"At the suit of Jones and Johnson—four thousand pounds."

It was in vain that the nurse appealed to the guard—the guard could not interfere. Next she would have turned upon the officers—but they were too much accustomed to their trade to be taken unprepared. Despite her screams, threats, and remonstrances, they succeeded at last in forcing her into a chaise, and drove off on the road to York.

The lawyer and Goliath—who, from the window of the parlour, had seen everything that passed—turned to each other and smiled.

"It is done!" said the former. "For six weeks I'll answer she does not trouble you; but she will have a heavy action for damages!"

"Let her!" repeated his client; "I'll pay them cheerfully! You, at any rate, need not be uneasy! You have the guarantee of the firm!"

"Which is quite sufficient!" observed the man of law, shaking him by the hand—for by this time the mail was ready to start, and he had taken his place to return in it to Newcastle. "You shall hear from time to time of our proceedings!"

And so they separated, mutually satisfied with each other: the speaker in having secured a great accession of political strength to his party—for, after all, politics had something to do with their compact—and his client, happy in the idea that his timely presence on the scene of action had defeated the fiend-like policy of the Frenchwoman—the persecutor of the unhappy Alice.

About a week after his arrival in London, Mr.

Brindley, accompanied by his lawyer, had a long interview with the French ambassador. The letters and papers found in the cabinet were submitted to his excellency, who, by the next courier, sent them under the seal of the embassy to France. Could the guilty Athalie have read the superscription, she might have trembled.

It was addressed to "the *Procureur du Roi, à Caen*:" the same functionary who had taken the lead in the investigation which followed the death of her aunt.

CHAPTER CXXXVII

Of times before ambitious eyes
I hold aloft the glittering prize:
He grasps, and finds a pall.

Robin Goodfellow.

AUGUST—the month so long and anxiously expected—arrived at last, and the wealthy goldsmith prepared for his journey to Portsmouth, to await the arrival of his godson—the son of his lost Alice—whom he longed to meet with all a father's fondness.

Well and nobly had Captain Vernon repaid the obligation which the generous old man had conferred upon him when Lord Moretown had called in the mortgage money advanced by the miser, Nicholas Arden upon his paternal estate. He had done for his charge what Mr. Brindley, with all his wealth, might have failed to achieve: formed his character—trained him in honour and in manly virtue—made him worthy of playing his part in the great game of life—all that his mother's love could have desired, or his unprincipled father and the abandoned Athalie most have feared.

The goldsmith's first visit was to Mount Vernon, from which place he was to accompany the captain's wife and daughter to the place of meeting. He was received like an old and valued friend. Annie—whom time, which perfects before it destroys, had transformed from a fairy-like child to lovely womanhood—was never tired of repeating all that her father and Dick had written of Fred's bravery and noble conduct. No wonder that the old man became attached to her. There is no path which leads so directly to the heart as the praise of those we love.

"Then you have not forgotten him?" he said.

The fair girl blushed deeply.

"Forgotten him!" she said; "how can you suppose me so ungrateful? Was he not the companion of my childhood—my playfellow—friend? How could I forget him?"

"Humph!" said the old gentleman, musingly—for neither the blush nor the deep earnestness with which she spoke escaped him; "such things have occurred! But we shall see—we shall see! Many a worldling has laughed at childhood's love, forgetful that the younger the vine the more vigorous its tendrils!"

On the same day that the happy party started in the carriage of Mr. Brindley for Portsmouth the Earl of Moretown received a visit from his brother-in-law, the Duke of Ayrton, who for several years had been a widower. His grace was a man of the world; he had long been aware of the *liaison* between his relative and the governess—but, as the outward proprieties of life were observed, had not chosen to notice it. Since the death of his duchess there had been a coolness between them; his lordship considering that his grace—who was in the cabinet—had been less attentive to his interests than he might be.

It is extraordinary, when political interests are at stake, how suddenly statesmen can remember old ties, friendships, and sometimes old promises. It was so in the present instance. The very existence of the administration was threatened; the opposition had twice defeated it upon a cabinet measure: every vote was of inestimable value—and Lord Moretown commanded three, without reckoning his own in the House of Lords.

"My dear fellow!" exclaimed his grace, as he entered the library, where his brother-in-law was busily engaged writing a letter to the leader of the Whigs, who had been tampering with him, "I suppose you have heard the news?"

"Cat?" said the earl, at the same time placing the half-finished epistle in his desk.

"Not yet!" replied the minister, with a smile; "and if our friends remain true to us, we may defy our opponents yet! Of course," he added, in the most confident tone imaginable, "we may rely upon you?"

The speaker had noticed the slight embarrassment of his lordship and the hasty concealment of the letter, but affected not to perceive either. It was not his game at present—time enough for that, should he find himself compelled to bid for him.

"Friends!" repeated the peer; "I presume you allude to those whom your party has secured—to whom their promises have been remembered! I scarcely come within the category! I see by the papers the Duke of Curry Foodie is dead. By-the-bye, who is to have the ribbon?"

"The Garter!" thought the statesman; "that is his price!"

"It could not have occurred at a more fortunate moment for you!" continued the speaker.

"Unfortunate you mean!" replied his visitor; "for one friend whom it will enable the cabinet to secure, it will make a dozen enemies. For my own part, I cannot understand how men can barter their political consistency for such a trifle!"

"We have all our weak points!" was the reply.

There was an awkward pause in the conversation. The Duke of Ayrton saw at once, from the tone of his relative, that the neglect of his claims had deeply offended him. He knew him to be selfish, proud, and vain: such men are generally more inveterate, even, than ambitious.

"Godfrey," he said, "shall I be candid with you?"

"I know no reason why you should not! Are we not relatives, as well as friends?"

"Undoubtedly!" replied his visitor, who perfectly comprehended the bitterness with which the words were uttered. "Well, then, in the present crisis, the cabinet is naturally anxious to ascertain on whom it can rely for support! I need not remind you that I have done everything in my power to meet your wishes."

"Duke," answered the earl, "there are wishes which become claims, from the very delicacy which prevented their being urged. For years I have voted for and given my interest—four votes, you will remember—to the present administration."

"True!"

"What, in return, has it done for me? I have seen men of less experience loaded with honours—twice has the Garter been given to men whose adherence was of less value than mine. This time I decline to pledge myself!"

"You surely cannot mean to go over to the opposition? Your brother-in-law in the cabinet, too. Why, the very men to whom you sell yourself would scorn you!"

"I mean exactly what I say!" was the cool rejoinder.

"A threat?"

"No—a reply. I decline to pledge myself."

The duke reflected. He knew the speaker to be a hasty, as well as a weak, vain man. The letter once written and sent could not be recalled; and the votes of his relative at the present juncture were really important—the very existence of the cabinet might depend on them—yet he could not undertake to promise without consulting his colleagues.

"Really, Godfrey," he said, "you take these things too seriously. There has been—there can have been no intention of slighting your claims; and I have no doubt that if the thing is properly represented—as I will take care it shall be—your wishes may be met."

The eyes of the earl sparkled with joy. It was the point which so many years he had been intriguing for.

"If not in the present instance," continued the speaker, "at least on some future occasion."

The countenance of the peer changed, and became cold and impassible as before. He was not to be bribed by the future. He had too long been an observer in the game of politics not to know the value of such a promise.

"At any rate," added his grace, "you will decide nothing rashly?"

"The farthest from my thoughts!"

"The cabinet meet on Wednesday—on Thursday I may have news for you. Adieu!"

The two nobles, who, at that moment, despite the tie between them, cordially hated each other, shook hands in the most affectionate manner. The duke felt annoyed that such a connection of his should bargain for his influence; and the earl was offended at a hesitation which implied that if the cabinet could do without his votes, the vacant Garter would be given to another.

"By the bye," observed his grace as they parted, "you need be in no hurry to finish that letter you were writing when I entered the room."

His lordship smiled—for his hopes grew strong at the hint.

The day after the meeting of the administration, his noble relative called upon his lordship again. This time his language was more definite: he had consulted, he said, with his colleagues, who all admitted the claims of Lord Moretown, but—

"But!" interrupted the peer, impatiently; "your grace need not have troubled yourself to be the bearer of a denial or an injustice!"

"Neither am I!" replied the minister. "Answer me one question—it is asked in the strictest confidence—not only as between near relatives, but men of honour!"

Moretown bowed.

"Are you prepared—that is, are your views sufficiently in accordance with those of the present admini-

nistration to induce you to place your three boroughs at their disposal?"

"And suppose they are?" observed his lordship.

"In that case the Garter would be yours!"

"Then you may as well congratulate me at once!" exclaimed the proud, vain man. "In addition to my boroughs, I promise you my personal influence in the Upper House, as well as my vote! When does the prorogation take place?"

"In a fortnight!"

"Send me the names of your candidates!" said his lordship.

"You shall have them in the morning—I must consult with my colleagues first! If it will be any additional pleasure, know," added he, "that you have carried off the garter from your old opponent, the Marquis of Dunsellford!"

To a mind like the Earl of Moretown's, this was indeed an additional triumph: he and his relative parted on the best terms imaginable. The first person to whom the intelligence was imparted was Athalie; and before the week had elapsed, the following paragraph had gone the round of the papers:—

"We understand that the king has signified his intention of bestowing the vacant Garter upon that distinguished nobleman and consistent statesman, the Earl of Moretown—a just tribute to his services, too long overlooked, but not forgotten by his country."

The reading of the above caused many a sneer in the political circles in which it was read, and some malicious wag altered it to:—

"Nominated to the vacant Garter, because he had one borough more at his disposal than the Marquis of Dunsellford."

The guilty Athalie received the intelligence of the successful issue of this negotiation with comparative indifference. What was the triumph of her duke to her, whilst the master passion of her nature—revenge—remained ungratified—more, that a fortnight had elapsed without her hearing from her agent, Mrs. Attey? Frequently did she ask herself if the woman had understood her secret meaning, or lacked courage to carry it into execution.

The mystery was at last revealed by a letter from the housekeeper at Moretown Abbey. The writer had heard of the arrest of the nurse, and at the last moment, when ma'mselle and his lordship was coming down wrote in inform him of it.

We need not say that the intelligence filled her with alarm and terror. The cruel and wicked seldom possess true courage: she dared not consult the peer upon the occasion, but was compelled to bear the weight of doubt and disappointment alone.

About a week before the dissolution of Parliament, the well-assorted pair started for the north. During their journey, the governess found courage to inform his lordship of Mrs. Attey's misadventure: for once he was alarmed.

"The crisis is at hand!" he said; "I have long foreseen it gathering in the distance. My son is now of age."

"True!" observed the temptress; "but his mother is an idiot. There you and fortune for once are quits."

"The boy," continued the peer, "has doubtless been brought up to hate and despise his father."

Athalie said nothing, but looked as if she thought it extremely probable.

"He takes the Riddle estate, too!"

"But you are still the owner of Moretown—are you not? He cannot deprive you of that?"

"No—no! Moretown is safe enough—and the Riddle estate, too, for the present."

The Frenchwoman's eyes sparkled with joy at the intelligence, although she was puzzled to comprehend it.

"What mean you?" she whispered.

"To deny that he is my son!" replied the unnatural father. "My enemies shall find that I am not easily baffled! To conceal him from me, they have doubtless brought him up in obscurity and ignorance! The very means they have taken to ruin me may defeat their object."

Thus did the guilty man, with that vacillation which was the prevailing foible of his character, pass at once from despair to hope—anticipate the punishment due to his many crimes, and the next moment pass to the extreme of confidence.

The morning after his arrival at Moretown he received a visit from his steward, who brought him a piece of intelligence which quickly put all his high-flown hopes to flight, and made him tremble for his promised honours.

A notice had been served upon every tenant of the Riddle estate, warning them to pay no more rent to the earl or his steward; it was signed "Pelgraves agent to Viscount Moretown."

"So," he exclaimed, "the brat knows of his brother's death. But never, if human means can prevent it, shall he succeed to the honours of my name."

Bitterly did Athalie regret the loss of the services

of Mr. Quirk at such a juncture; he would have been the very person to have served her purpose. The instant she reached her own room she rang for the housekeeper, and inquired if any letters had arrived.

The woman placed a dirty-looking, ill-directed note upon the table.

"When did this arrive?" inquired the governess.

"About a fortnight since, ma'mselle."

"You should have forwarded it!" said the Frenchwoman, unable to conceal her anger; "it was of importance; but I suppose you, like the rest of the servants, are leagued with my enemies."

"Enemies!" repeated the old lady; "I don't understand."

"Perhaps not!" interrupted the disappointed fury. "The annoyance is the same, whether it proceeds from malice or stupidity. Leave the room!"

The housekeeper tossed her head disdainfully, and observed, "That she had never been treated so either by his lordship's first or present lady—and they were ladies," she added, maliciously. "How was she to know where to send the letters of Ma'mselle Athalie? Not to his lordship, she supposed."

"You are insolent!" exclaimed Athalie. "Quit the room, or my next order will be for you to leave the house."

"If my lord gives me notice," replied the housekeeper, "I shall accept it; but I have no orders to receive at Moretown Abbey from—"

She hesitated; the word trembled on the lips of the speaker—yet somehow she felt unwilling to drive matters to extremities.

"From whom?" demanded the Frenchwoman, turning very pale.

"His mistress! And now I have eased my mind!" said the domestic. "Thank heaven, if I quit to-morrow, I shall leave with a clear conscience, and an independence! You may possess the latter," she added; "but I very much doubt the first."

Without waiting for a reply, the speaker bounced out of the apartment.

"Mistress!" repeated the governess; "ay, it is the word. They whisper it, if they do not speak it. It must be changed for that of wife. As Countess of Moretown I can brave the world—its sneers and scorn."

She opened the scrawl which the housekeeper had left: it was from Mrs. Attey, informing her of the particulars of her arrest for the sum of four thousand pounds, and concluded with an assurance that the writer did not owe as many favours in the world.

"I see—I see it all!" exclaimed the disappointed feud; "the idiot has friends who will watch over her! Let them!" she added; "my blow shall be struck long—long before the hand which directs it can be seen."

(To be continued.)

SCIENCE.

FIRE EXTINCTION AND PREVENTION.

CARBONIC acid gas extinguishes fire immediately. Might not this be generated in portable or ordinary fire engines, and impelled into the front or back of a house or building through openings permanently made therein, and ordinarily kept plugged high up in the doors or walls of buildings?

THE LATEST NOVELTY.—The model of a new electro-magnetic locomotive is now exhibiting at Versailles. Its inventors, MM. Bellett and Rouvre, assert that locomotives constructed on their principle could travel on ordinary railroads at the rate of 124 miles an hour. The power is obtained by magnetizing and de-magnetizing by means of a current supplied by a fixed battery, and, it is said, utilizes only a small part of the forces developed.

AMMONIACAL GAS AS A MOTOR.—M. Ch. Tellier has conceived a new and curious application of this gas. He proposes to take advantage of its peculiar properties, and use it, in certain cases, as a substitute for steam. The qualities referred to are, its great solubility in water, its easy liquefaction, its power of supplying motive power at the ordinary atmospheric temperature, the capability of its vapour being superheated without too great an increase of the temperature, the possibility of re-collecting it by solution, and the facility of extracting the latent heat from its vapour, after the latter has been employed, and transmitting it to that which is about to be used, by the simple act of dissolving the gas in water. With a given quantity of ammoniacal gas and three times its weight of water, says the inventor, the whole of the former may be vaporized and used as a motive force with a pressure of 8 to 10 atmospheres, and the action would be constant because the latent heat required for the vaporization would be constantly reproduced by the calorific released by condensation. So that liquid ammonia is said to supply an instantaneous and

practical means of obtaining a motive vapour. With about 22 lbs. of the liquid, we are told, the force of one horse may be obtained for an hour. The inventor does not pretend to place this system in competition with the steam-engine, but only where the production of steam would be impracticable and inconvenient. For instance, he says, "an omnibus, drawn by two ammoniacal horses, only need carry about 40 lbs. of liquid ammonia and 120 lbs. weight of water. This would supply a simple motor, without smoke or steam, instantaneous in its action however long and frequent were the stoppages, and with an economy over horses of at least 75 per cent." M. Tellier also recommends his invention for steep inclines on railways, tunnels, mines, and other places where heat cannot be tolerated.

The burning of a ship, when occurring in the hold from the want of ventilation and due egress of the combustible gaseous matter generated, might, we believe, be rendered impossible. To effect this it is now suggested that a temporary and moveable framing be fixed to the narrow ledging of scarcely a foot high which commonly surrounds the opening to the hold, and carried up some 7 ft. or 8 ft. high, or even more, the last 2 ft. or 3 ft. taking a conical form; and at the extreme top an opening to be left, to serve as a chimney for the escape of the combustible air or gas. The reason for elevating this hold-covering so considerably is to preserve the cargo from heavy seas washing into the hold and destroying very frequently the greater portion of its contents. The orifice or chimney might, perhaps, be judiciously fitted with a tube, whose lowest end, or that terminating in the hold, might have a "rose" top, similar to those attached to the watering-pots used in gardening operations. Should a fire break out in the hold, a hose could be fixed to the upper end of the chimney, and a stream of water thrown down, which, by means of the "rose" top, would be spread over a larger extent of surface.

NOTWITHSTANDING the nature of the season, the French botanists are busily engaged in carrying on their investigations. M. Corenwinder has just communicated to the academy an important note upon the subject of vegetable respiration. He asks the question—Do the leaves of plants exhale carbonic acid? and replies in the negative. In order to estimate the quality of the gases exhaled by plants, he caused them to pass through bulbs containing caustic potash, and also through a tube containing oxide of copper heated to redness. From repeated experiments, M. Corenwinder concludes as follows:—1. That the proportion of carbonic oxide and other combustible gases in the atmosphere is unappreciable. 2. Vegetable matter in a state of decomposition does not exhale a trace of these gases. 3. These gases are not found in the gaseous exhalations of even the most odoriferous flowers. 4. That the leaves of plants never exhale combustible gases; this assertion applying under the conditions of night and day, and light and shade. 5. That when a plant is submitted to the action of sun-light, in the presence of a considerable proportion of carbonic acid, the latter is rapidly absorbed, but the leaves do not emit carbonic oxide.

MR. J. B. NELSON, the inventor of the hot blast, died recently. This invention may be said to have revolutionized the iron trade, and added largely to the sources of wealth and happiness throughout the world. The west of Scotland has especially benefited from the stimulus which this invention has given to the development of its mineral treasures during the last 55 years. In 1828, when the hot blast was invented, the produce of the smelting furnaces of Scotland was not more than 29,000 tons per annum; in 1864 the produce was 1,160,000. In 1828 the average selling price of a ton of pig iron was about £7; while in 1864 it was £2 17s. 8d. A large, if not the largest, portion of this increased production and money saving is to be traced more or less directly to the general adoption of the hot blast process. Even before Mr. Nelson's patent expired in 1842, the process had become general in all the iron-producing districts of Europe and America, and was even practised in India. Mr. Nelson was a native of Shettleston, near Glasgow. He was born in 1792, and was brought up as a working mechanic. Mr. Nelson had been twice married, and he left a numerous family.

GLASS.—The discovery of glass is involved in great doubt and uncertainty. The generally received account is that of the Roman writer Pliny, who relates that some shipwrecked Venetian mariners, having burnt the kail plant on a sea shore while cooking their food, were surprised to observe a transparent substance remaining. This accidental circumstance became known to the people of Sidon, who carried out the hint they had in this way received, and hence, according to this authority, the discovery of the art.

The heat of the fire employed on that occasion could not, however, have been sufficient for vitrification. Window-glass appears to have been made in England in the middle of the fifteenth century, but it was of inferior description. In 1557, a finer sort of window-glass was manufactured at Crutched Friars, in London. The first flint glass was made at Savoy House, in the Strand; and the first plate glass was made at Lambeth, in 1673, by Venetian workmen, brought over by the Duke of Buckingham.

EARTHENWARE chimneys for locomotives have been recently adopted by the Berlin, Potsdam, and Magdeburg Railway Company. They are glazed inside, and are put together with cement. Their cost complete is about £20 sterling, while those made of cast-iron are found to cost about £28, and those of one-eighth-inch wrought-iron about £40.

A GRATEFUL Manchester merchant who has been lately *fêted en prince* by Garibaldi, has paid off the bill of gratitude like a king. He has sent Garibaldi a collection of eccentrics worth £500, which includes all sorts of things: a cow, a bull—not a Papal one—a box of cigars worth £150, a litter of pigs, Berkshire breed; a dog and madame; needles, pins, cotton, and thread and Bandana handkerchiefs.

At a meeting of the London branch of the German National Verein held recently, it was declared, "That a free and civilised state cannot be established unless capital punishment, and all imprisonment exceeding ten years, is abolished for civil offences." We thought England free and civilised—a great many great people have told us so. We have thought that it was a most unbecoming offence to murder on a railway; but we are clearly a people deep in error, and stand in need of enlightenment from the German Verein.

THE LATE CYCLONE IN INDIA.

SIXTY thousand persons appear to have been destroyed by the Cyclone of November last in India. In the island of Sangoor, out of 8,200 persons but 1,200 have been left. The remaining seven thousand passed, in less than an hour, out of existence.

All along the eastern coast of the Indian peninsula went wind and storm, fulfilling His word. It was the time of spring tides, and, under the influence of the hurricane, the sea rose to an unexampled height. Up the course of the Ganges the wave rushed, overwhelming the villages on the banks, and leaving the few who survived the flood to perish for want of food. Their grain being rotted, and their crops destroyed by the salt water, they had no resource but to die. But the scene of the greatest disaster appears to have been Masulipatam, about half-way down the coast. The town lies a little to the north of one of the mouths of the Kistna, on the plain which stretches from the Kistna to the Godavery.

The mud, which has for ages been washed down these rivers, has formed a district a little above the level of the sea. In the wet season it is overflooded by the freshets of the Kistna, and it requires at all times to be protected from the ocean by sea-walls and dykes.

The Cyclone, rushing across the Bay of Bengal, fell upon the spot which was least prepared to meet it. The centre of the hurricane passed within a mile of the devoted town at 10 p.m. on the 1st of November, in a night of utter darkness. Amid the storm of wind, a tidal wave, thirteen feet higher than the highest tide-mark, surmounted sea-walls and dykes, and poured over the whole of the surrounding country.

For an hour the water rose, and covered nearly eight hundred square miles of the plain, and when it retired, at eleven, the work of destruction was done. The plain, for eighty miles along the coast, and for nine to ten miles inland, had been submerged, and in one place the storm-wave had reached a spot seventeen miles from the shore. The low-built houses of the natives had been washed away, and those which might have reached above the wave had been blown down by the fury of the storm.

The fiercest powers of the natural world were at work, and in the darkness of night there was no escape possible, whatever might have been done in the light of day. Whole villages were entirely destroyed; their inhabitants were drowned, their cattle were lost, and their crops buried beneath a thick deposit of mud and sand.

The mud banks were full of unburied corpses; half the town was in ruins; fallen trees, drift, the ruins of houses, and deep pools of salt water made streets and roads impassable. Huge barges had been carried into the centre of the town, and masses of solid masonry had been rolled, boulder-like, distances of sixty and seventy yards. In fort and town one-third of the inhabitants had perished. A thousand were drowned in the fort, and fifteen thousand in the town, and in the surrounding villages twenty thousand more met their death. In one Brahmin village on the outskirts of Masulipatam 70 only remained alive out of 700.

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE RED SEA AND THE MEDITERRANEAN.—M. P. de Lesseps has just informed the Chambers of Commerce in France that communications are now open, by water, between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, and that a daily service of boats is established between Port Said and Suez. A barge containing from 25 to 30 persons, and towed by a small steamer has already traversed, in 24 hours, the 94 miles which separate the two seas. The Isthmus of Suez Canal Company also invites the Chambers of Commerce to send delegates to report on the present state of the works, and on the uses for the transport of goods and passengers which may be made of the canal, offering as it does a continuous stream of water fifty feet wide, and of a minimum depth of four feet.

FACETIE.

English operators are to be employed on the St. Petersburg and China telegraph. Broken china will be sent over the wires.

Mr. Emerson has recently delivered a lecture on education, advocating the right of students to elect their professors. Why not be logical, and declare at once for the right of children to elect their fathers?

"HURRAH! hurrah!" cried a young lawyer, who had succeeded to his father's practice, "I've settled that old Chancery suit at last." "Settled it!" cried the horrified parent; "why, I gave you that as an anxiety for your life."

The Duchess of S—, once beautiful and replete with wit, was congratulating herself on her youthful looks, and pretending that she was born at least twenty years later than she really was, when her daughter, more beautiful than her mother, endeavoured to put a stop to her exaggerations by crying aloud, "Oh, mamma, do leave at least nine months between our ages."

AN IMPERTINENT BOY.

"Mister, how do you sell beef this morning?"

"Why, tenpence a pound. How much will you have?"

"Eh? Have you got a heart, sir?"

"No; just sold it."

"Well, I just knowed that you couldn't have a heart, and ax tenpence a pound for beef. I'm sorry you sold it, 'cause I'd like to have some meat."

A moment after, the boy might have been seen running out of the butcher's shop, and a shin-bone after him.

Our American fashionable friends have got two wonderful colours this season for their silks; one is called London smoke, and the other Nightingale's sigh. A third, less sentimental, but which might bring a little reflection about as to their situation and senses, would be greenback colour.

The rapacity of the French *concierges*, or home-keepers, is on a par with their insolence. Not long ago one of them asked an actor whom he happened to have as a lodger for a ticket for himself, as he wished to see a piece that had just been brought out. The good-natured comedian gave him a line to the secretary, who at once handed him a pit ticket; but what was the astonishment of the donor when he found his next weekly account charged with a franc for carrying his letter to the secretary!

There is a very droll fashion prevalent in Paris just now—that of covering your servants with fur. Now fur is what tailors call "very nice winter wear," and on the bodies of stout coachmen and sturdy giants of footmen, with a grand baroque or old family coach, looks very well; but when the ladies get out and walk, "John" looks very odd pottering behind—beginning like a bear, and "basely ending" in gaiters. This looks urbane, and reminds one of the Jardin des Plantes; but when a very small man is driving himself in a very seedy one-horse turn-out, holding perhaps a rein in each hand, which give him the appearance of one fishing without luck; when such a one has, in the little seat behind him, a tall, elderly man, half-covered with bear or fox skin, and the other half made up of worn-out livery and a very old hat—then neither man nor master seems to be the right person in the right place.

THE GOAT AND THE RAILWAY.—In Prussian Poland the goods and cattle trains are prohibited from passengers under any conditions, and however urgent their necessities, the only exceptions allowed being the herd-keepers in charge of the cattle. So strictly is this regulation enforced, that even medical men are not allowed to go by them when called for on an emergency, and where life and death may be the result of their quick transit. This is generally considered a great hardship, the more so as there are only two passenger trains daily on the above railroads. But the inventive genius of a small German innkeeper at Lissa has hit upon a clever plan of cir-

cumventing the Government regulation in a perfectly legitimate manner. He keeps a goat, which he hires out to persons wanting to proceed in a hurry by a cattle train, at the rate of 6d. per station, the passenger then applying for a ticket as the person in charge of the goat, which he obtains without any difficulty. In this manner a well-known nobleman, residing at Lissa, is frequently seen travelling by cattle train to Posen, in the passengers' carriage, and the goat is so tame that a very slender silk ribbon suffices to keep it from straying.

THE CROSS AN ENSIGN.—The holy ensign of the cross was often used in dress in order to command a homage the wearer would not otherwise have received. In 1363, the father of the Doge of Venice preferred always going bareheaded to pulling off his cap to his son, until the Doge thought of placing a golden cross in front of his cap. The father then re-assumed his cap, and when he met his son, pulled it off, saying: "It is not him I salute, but the cross;" and from that time the cross became an ornament of the ducal cap.

THE DUMPKIN AND THE BUTCHER;

OR, JERKED BEEF.

If you be a hunger'd, to comfort your grief
I bring you glad tidings of cheap and good beef,
So fill up your glasses and pass the jug round:
Here's prime beef a zellun at threepence a pound.

This here beef from Chilli comes over to we,
Likewise from La Plata; they call it charkee,
Whereof we makes "jerked," like as usual we doos,
Wi they forran words of eignors and moossoos.

Sitch beef, beun properly salted and dried,
Must needs be prepared for to line the inside,
And if you proposes upon it to dine,
You must soak it and steep it to get out the brine.

Then beat it wi mallet, or roll it wi pin,
So not for to let no salt liquor bide in;
Then cut it in bits which you biles ur you stows,
Or chops 'em up fine for a mince if you choose.

Says I to Phil Steers, in his surplus o' blue,
"We shan't need much longer depend upon you.
Fresh beef must soon come down from tenpence thee
zee,

Now we can purchas good salt beef for three."

Says Phil, wi a grunt like a hog in a huff,
"Beef? Yaa, that ain't beef not that there charkee
stuff!"

"Tis hossflesh," says Phil, "fit for no Christian's fare,
'Tis carron," say Phillip, a says, "is that there."

"How canst thee, now Phil," I sez to un, sez I,
"How canst thee stand there now, and tell me that
lie?"

Doat call that beef hoss? Haas as well medat call me,
But I han't got the ears for believun o' thee.

"The lab'ers partakes it their stummacks to fill
In Cuba, and aites it likewise in Brazil.
There's judges has tried it, knows what they're about,
And all on 'em found it a proper blow out."

"Zet people agin it you butchers 'ood fain,
For fear it should lessen your profit and gain;
But zay what will you, you wun't vrighten poor men
From buyin at threepence what you zells at ten."

"Chawbacons fine gentelfolks often calls we;
Well, now then let's chaw um o' that there charkee,
I zay live and let live, and plenty abound,
Success to the beef only threepence a pound."

—Punch.

The announcement having been made by advertisement that a work on the colours of leaves and plants would be issued by T. Rothschild, considerable curiosity was felt as to the financial character of the work which would deal in the colour of leaves and plants, as nought else but gold, and silver, and finance would flow from his pen it was thought, but it was found differently when the Rothschild author was discovered to be a scientific gentleman bearing this respected financial name, and that this was a mere translation from an English work.

"AS SHE SAT ON THE COLD GAS-TAR."—Rather a funny case was heard in the Court of Common Pleas. A Mrs. Matilda Collier sued a farmer named Chaplin to recover damages for an injury to her and to her clothes from being upset by the defendant, while riding in his spring cart. The plaintiff said she lived in Lansdowne Place, Brunswick Square, and was a straw-bonnet-maker. On a Sunday in September last she went by an excursion train to Folkestone. She did not return that day, and in the evening she went out to walk with two friends, Sergeant Gregory and Mrs. Gregory; they walked up the Folkestone Road. Mr. Chaplin, the defendant, had a spring cart standing at a tavern door, and Mr. Chaplin and Sergeant Gregory went into the tavern. On coming out the defendant asked them if they were going to Sandgate, and invited the plaintiff and her friend to take a

drive, "as they were down there for hair, it would do them good." They assented, but did not know that there was any gas-tar in the cart, and the defendant asked them to have a glass of ale, "and out of politeness to him they took it and got into the cart." They had not got up five minutes when he drove violently, and Mrs. Gregory said, "Oh, we shall be killed." "Oh, no; it's all right," he said, "I can drive through the hi of a needle" (loud laughter). He had scarcely said the words when he met a gig, ran against it, and "we was all hupset, and a can of gas-tar in the cart was hupset all over us" (laughter). Her silk dress, which cost £5 10s., was all spoilt, and her ankle very much hurt. The plaintiff subsequently said that her under-clothing was worth £40, a statement which created considerable surprise and amusement. The jury found a verdict for the defendant.

A DOMESTIC SERVANT'S CHARACTER BY HER MISTRESS.—A lady went to the matron of a public institution in Sheffield (says the *Sheffield Telegraph*), and selected a girl to act as domestic servant at her house. When she had been in the situation a short time, the girl was sent back to the institution with a note to the matron. The following is a verbatim copy of the note:—This Girl as left her place at dose Not Like Warke she As plenty of something to eat An very Little to dow I am Sorry to say she is a very sorry girl indeed i have been very much Sore With her."

EARNING HIS CERTIFICATE.

Family Doctor: "And no port, mind; if you drink port wine, you'll have another attack of gout, as you as feto."

Country Gentleman: "Quite certain?"

Doctor: "No doubt about it."

Country Gentleman: "The very thing. You say and dine; we'll have some of that 'thirty-four'; and—I'm summoned on a jury the day after tomorrow!"—Punch.

PUNISHMENT FOR PAUTERS.—Is it true that calk-picking is work to which paupers are put in workhouses? If so, we would suggest that, as a punishment for poverty, the treadmill or the crank be substituted for a kind of hard labour which has the disadvantage of incapacitating some of the poor for needlework and other lightheaded employment by spoiling their fingers.—Punch.

OFF WITH HIS HEAD.—A *carte de visite* of General Butler has been recently published. It is said to be so true a likeness as to be absolutely striking. A southern lady of our acquaintance says it is well done, but that, being copied from a painting, its execution might be better. She wishes he had been taken from life.—Fun.

SHEER FOLLY.—A contemporary complains that new sheers to lift forty tons are being erected at Woolwich, although there is a crane, which cost two thousand pounds, of exactly similar power lying unused. We suppose the local authorities want to encourage the division of labour, and let the crane and the new construction sheer and sheer alike.—Fun.

SAD IF TRUE!—It is stated in Parisian gossip that when the Prince Imperial was signing his name to the marriage contract of Mademoiselle de Gondrecourt, the emperor observed to him that he was a long time doing it, whereupon the young prince replied, "When one has a name like ours it requires a long time to write it!" Poor child! What painful precocity is encouraged in a palace! When he grows older he will learn that the name his father leaves him will take a very long time indeed to right.—Fun.

SALE OF A WIFE AND THREE CHILDREN.

It will be in the recollection of some of our readers that, a few weeks ago, a paragraph went the round of the papers to the effect that a man named Samuel Jones, residing at Wolverhampton, had sold his wife and three blooming children to an American adventurer, for the moderate sum of £150. As was then mentioned, the wife left her lawful husband, and, with the three children, went to live with her American admirer. It would appear, however, that a few days ago she repented of her bargain, and returned to the protection of Mr. Samuel Jones. Upon finding himself deserted, the American communicated with the husband, and informed him that if he could persuade his wife to return to him he would give the husband an additional £50. The husband accordingly tried all his powers of persuasion to get the wife to leave him, and finding her quite willing, communicated with our American cousin, who was in London. He went down to Wolverhampton. He there saw the husband and wife, and it was arranged that the American, with the wife and three children, should leave Wolverhampton for London, by the 7:15 p.m. train. The Yankee, to make sure of his prize, arranged with Mr. Jones that he should see them to the station, and upon the signal being given to him for the train to start he would hand

him a £50 Bank of England note. The husband accordingly saw the American, his wife, and three children, safely into the train, and upon it leaving the platform received a Bank of England note from his friend.

The train had hardly left the station, when, upon looking at the note, he found that it was a simple £5 note. Finding he was duped out of £45, his wife and three children, he at once sent the following graphic telegraphic message to the police in this town:—

"Tall, thin man run away with my wife and three children, two boxes, two hand-boxes, and a carpet bag. He is an American, with a bowie-knife in the belt, and a revolver. They are going to London, but husband will be at Birmingham by the next train. Rooted from Wolverhampton to New Street Station. To be detained."

Upon Detective-Inspector Tandy receiving the telegram, he directed Detective-Sergeants Spokes and Jones to meet the train, and look out for the American, the wife, and three children. These two active officers accordingly went to the station, and upon making inquiries of the railway officials, found the husband in the cloak-room, he having arrived from Wolverhampton by the express, which reaches Birmingham about ten minutes after the ordinary train. The officers made further inquiries, and found that the American had arrived. They then went to the Dudley Street side of the station, where the husband saw the American, with his wife and the luggage, he being in the act of putting the latter into a cab.

The husband, going up to the Yankee, said: "Well, John, how are you getting on?" to which he replied: "All right, I guess." Upon this the husband informed him that he had given him a £50 note, and he wanted the latter sum. Said the American: "Well, I guess it was a mistake," and taking a bundle of notes from his pocket, handed Mr. Jones a £50 Bank of England note, which was passed to the detectives, who found it to be quite genuine. The husband then shook hands with his wife, and kissing his children, wished them "good-bye," and with a friend who was with him, went to the nearest vault, where he "liquored" with his friend.

The last that was seen of the American was that he, with the purchased wife and three children, was "making tracks" for the London train, where, we believe, they safely arrived.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

A wet shovel held over varnished furniture will show out white spots.

TO PERFUME LINEN.—Rose leaves dried in the sun, cloves beat to a powder, mace scraped. Mix them together, and put the composition into bags.

TO MEDICINE-TAKERS.—If any person who is obliged to take offensive medicine would first take a bit of oil into the mouth, they could then take the medicine with as much ease as though it was so much sugar.

SALTED BUTTER.—What is the reason of butter not keeping? Salt evidently won't keep it from going rancid beyond a certain time. The vast quantities that are annually condemned by the customers in Laid and elsewhere clearly demonstrate the fact. Now, why should such a large amount of food be wasted, and why a still larger amount be eaten in an unwholesome condition? From a lengthened experience in the use of butter, it is the quantity of milk left in it which spoils. We extracted some milk from some sweet butter six weeks ago, and it remains perfectly sweet yet without the use of salt. This same butter would not keep beyond three days without going bad. We extracted the milk effectually by placing the dish in hot water, the butter on it; and as the butter dissolves, the milk falls to the bottom, and the pure butter remains on the top. You can separate them simply by pouring off the butter. After it is cold and has set, a very little salt would preserve it for any length of time. We are certain it would never become rancid.

A NEW MODE OF CURING DISEASE.—A new system of cure for nervous suffering has been the subject of conversation for some weeks past, but the late experiment triumphantly cited in proof of its success having been the cure of a frightful attack of neuralgia in the head, by means of a copper saucapin worn helmetwise, I declined mentioning the subject. However, a serious article has appeared, which I cannot leave unnoticed, reminding the world in general of the theory started by Paracelsus that every organ of the human frame has a certain affinity for a special metal or vegetable. The Zurich doctor argued thence that as the heart is known to be influenced by the sun, and as gold is the symbol of the sun, therefore heart diseases can be cured by certain solutions of that metal; that as the liver is influenced by the planet

Saturn, of which mercury is the symbol, liver disease could be cured by preparations of mercury, and so on. Dr. Buroq, starting from totally opposite premises, has, however, invented a system of metallotherapy, which engages the serious attention of the scientific world at the present moment. The writer of the article states that he was present recently at the following experiment:—A person had been for two days suffering intense agony from intercostal pain, which had all the characteristics of neuralgia. Dr. Buroq was sent for. He applied an iron disc to the part affected, with no result. He wished to try the influence of copper. A brass candlestick being near at hand, he applied it, on which the pain instantly vanished.

WHY SHOULD OUR EYES.

Why should our eyes be always wet.

Our cheeks be always pale?

Why should our terror-stricken hearts

Before the tempest quail?

Why should we shrink when sorrow's waves

Have reared their foaming crest—

When hopes are bright as infants' dreams

Upon their mothers' breast?

What though the wrecks of scattered hopes

Around our pathway lie?

Yet life hath charms for every soul,

Whose sweets shall never die!

Why should we dip our spirit's wings

In sorrow's rapid tide,

When peace, and joy, and happiness,

Around on every side?

Why should we then be sorrowful

Within this world so bright?

Why should we turn the joyous day

Into the gloomy night?

When nature sings unto each heart,

With sweet angelic voice,

And bids us all to gaze on her,

And, as we gaze, rejoice?

Let us no more our souls within

Sorrow's fount be steeping;

No longer let our eyes be wet

By a continual weeping;

But, by a free and hearty laugh,

Let us dispel all sadness,

And change our sorrow, grief, and pain,

To peace, and joy, and gladness.

M.

GEMS.

FRIENDSHIP is a dangerous word for young ladies; it is full fledged, and waiting for a fine day to fly.

The cloudy weather melts at length into beauty, and the brightest smiles of the heart are born of its tears!

THERE are many vices which do not deprive us of friends: there are many vices which prevent our having any.

CORRECTION does much, but encouragement will do more. Encouragement after censure is like the sun after a shower.

PROUD men never have friends; neither in prosperity, because they know nobody, nor in adversity, because nobody knows them.

LIFE often resembles the trap-tree, with its spines directed upward, on which the bear easily clammers up to the honey-bait, but from which he can slide down again only under severer stings.

TELL a plain countryman that the sun is much bigger than his cart-wheel, and he laughs thee to scorn; yet the scholar by the eye of reason plainly sees and acknowledges the truth. Such is the difference between ignorance and knowledge.

As before swift ships there swims a hill of water, and a corresponding one glides along behind, so always before us is a mountain, which we hope to climb, and, behind us, still a deep valley out of which we have ascended.

EAT, digest; read, remember; earn, save; love, and be loved. If these four rules be strictly followed, health, wealth, intelligence and true happiness will be the result. Try it, every one, during the new year.

STATISTICS.

THERE are now 264 post towns in the United Kingdom which send a day mail to London; 73 towns which send three day mails to London; 15 towns which send four day mails, and 6 which send five day mails.

THE census of Bombay shows an existing population of 816,562. Two hundred years ago, at the time of the cession by Portugal, it was only 10,000. The

Indo-Europeans now number 1,891; the Europeans, 4,814; and the Jews, 2,872; and of native Christians there are 19,983. The Parsees number 49,201; the Mussulmans, 145,880; the Brahmans, 80,604; and the Hindoos, 191,540. There are only 2,074 negroes, and 358 Chinese. This enormous and seething population is contained in 24,206 houses.

PRICES OF CORN SINCE 1600.—Official returns give the average prices of wheat from 1600 to the present date. The highest averages from 1600 to 1795 were in 1648, when the average was 75s. 6d., and in 1795, when it was 75s. 2d. In 1796 it rose to 78s. 7d.; in 1800 it was 110s. 5d., and next year 115s. 11d. The highest average on record, however, was in 1812, when it was 122s. 8d. In 1813 it was 105s. 6d., and it fell next year to 72s. 1d., and declined, with little oscillation, to 1835, when the average was 39s. 4d. It afterwards rose again, but in 1851 was as low as 38s. 7d. It again rose to 74s. 9d. in 1855. In the last four years it has been gradually declining, having been in 1861, 55s. 6d.; in 1862, 55s. 6d.; in 1863, 44s. 9d.; and last year, 40s. per quarter.

MISCELLANEOUS.

It appears that the new railways projected in connection with the metropolis are fourteen miles in length, and that the cost of their construction will be 17,000,000.

THE Dorchester magistrates have decided that apples are not agricultural produce, and therefore not exempt from toll when conveyed by horse and cart through turnpike gates!

AN English schooner has been seized and plundered by some of the subjects of the King of Dahomey. We shall therefore be able to come to hard words with him, and threaten blows, if he does not amend his ways according to British notions.

CONFEDERATE official accounts state that from October 26th to early in January, the blockade runners landed 1,500,000lb. of lead, nearly 2,000,000lb. of saltpetre, 69,000 rifles, 43 cannon, 646,000 pair of shoes, 316,000 pairs of blankets, 8,600,000lb. of meat, besides coffee, medicines, &c.

It is asserted that a photographer, who has been employed by the Dutch Government to take views of the most beautiful points on the Island of Java, has discovered an entire city buried beneath the lava of a volcano close by, which has been extinct for several centuries.

SUNNY ITALY.—Seven or eight degrees of frost (Reaumur), heavy masses of snow, dense fogs, telegraph wires converted into cables by the rime that clings around them and occasionally descends in flaky showers on the heads of the passengers,—such is winter at this moment in the capital of sunny Italy.

It is not generally known that the Prince of Wales is Lord of the Manor of Midsomer Norton. His Royal Highness has just forwarded two 5l. notes towards the village school, and the letter accompanying the gift intimated that a similar sum would be forwarded annually in future.

At the Burns anniversary, on the 25th of January, the Glasgow clubs drank the health of the sons of the poet—William Nicol Burns, now 73 years of age, and James Glencairn Burns, aged 71, both colonels in the Indian army. The sons, informed of the fact by telegraph, returned grateful acknowledgments from their residence in Cheltenham.

THE will of the Duke of Newcastle has been sworn under 250,000l. The will is of considerable length, and there are six codicils. His Grace has charged his estates with liberal annuities for his younger sons, as also for his Grace's brothers, Lord Robert and Lord Thomas Clinton, appointing his son, the present Duke, residuary legatee. To each of his executors acting he has left 200l., and to his valet a legacy of 200l.

FROM amongst the foreigners come to seek their fortunes in his new empire, the Emperor of Mexico singles out the Poles for his especial favour, and has lately, on several occasions, spoken out with remarkable frankness his deep sympathy with that unfortunate people. It seems that his feelings are warmly reciprocated by the empress, who, from her earliest childhood, has been warmly attached to the Polish cause. In the course of conversation with a distinguished young Polish officer, the emperor lately declared that it was his earnest wish to found in Mexico a second Poland. This sounds awkward for the Mexicans, but he went on to say that he wished to attract as many Poles as possible to his new empire, who should find perfect liberty, and should elect hetmen and starostas of old. "You shall find here a home, and I will be your father." These words he spoke with the deepest emotion. "Your sufferings," he added, "have caused the empress many a sleepless night."

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

G. IVRA.—The ode entitled "Spring" is declined, with thanks.

H. J.—Your inquiry has been anticipated. (See reply to "M. A. W." in No. 94.)

A. C. R.—The conditions under which we receive manuscripts are stated at the foot of this page.

ANDREW HAZARD.—Marriage, with a deceased wife's sister is illegal.

MARY ANN S.—The handwriting is rather deficient in clearness and symmetrical formation of the letters. With careful practice it might become good enough for commercial purposes.

W. H. O.—Whether the mental capacities of the sexes are equal is a vexed question: the weight of opinion, however, would seem to lean towards the negative. (See also reply to "K. O. F.")

F. S.—The observations on "Female Temper" are very just and admirable; for there is no doubt that the possession of a sweet temper is the most valuable trait in the female character. We must, however, decline to insert the extract.

W. P. H.—Geographers now recognise five instead of four chief divisions of the earth—viz., Europe, Asia, Africa, America, and Australasia.

A. B. C.—Marriages of Catholics and Protestants may be celebrated either first according to the rites of the Catholic Church, and subsequently according to the regular service of the established church; or vice versa.

D. W. F.—An ascending apprentice can, when discovered by his master, be compelled to serve out whatever period of his apprenticeship may remain unexpired.

H. R.—If not addicted to the pernicious habit of tight-lacing, there is no better means of subduing and preventing the redness complained of than pure air and plenty of exercise.

VERNON.—There is no difficulty at all in obtaining instruction in elocution. The addresses of several professors of the art will be found in the advertising columns of the daily papers.

HELEN L.—The stage, as you seem to surmise, has more pitfalls than prizes, and is perhaps the most dangerous profession which a young woman could enter upon. If your genius, however, impels you to it, the better course for a novice is to take in to obtain private instruction, and then procure a provincial engagement.

ARTHUR AND GLADSTONE.—The mean height of Englishmen is 5 ft. 9 in. and the mean weight 150 lbs. avoirdupois (though in carriages it is usually considered that it averages 165 lbs.) The Englishman is taller than the Belgian by 2½ inches, and heavier by about 10 lbs.; and taller than the Frenchman by ½ inch, and heavier by about 25 lbs.

W. W. O.—The qualifications for permanent clerks in any of the military offices in Ireland are—writing from dictation, arithmetic (including vulgar and decimal fractions), English composition, price, geography, and English history. Temporary clerks only require to be qualified in writing from dictation, arithmetic (elementary), and correspondence.

FRICATOR.—The fishing-tackle shops are lauded with every variety of artificial baits for "spinning," and if you are wise, you will purchase your artificial minnow instead of making it yourself, for by any process you will, as an amateur, scarcely succeed in making your bait sufficiently brilliant.

H. O. T.—Two or three drops of essential oil of cloves, on a small piece of lint, and placed in the hollow of the tooth, will cure the toothache without injuring either the tooth or the gums. A small piece of solid opium inserted into the hollow tooth will also give relief.

T. D. H.—The cause of corns is continued friction, which lubrication with some oily substance will not only counteract, but remove the corns. Apply with the tips of the fingers a little sweet oil to the affected part, in the morning and at night (the corn having been previously pared carefully), when the pain will gradually diminish and the corn disappear.

SAMUEL S.—A visit to the Australian gold-diggings would not, we imagine, endow you with a strong and hardy constitution, that being the exact description of constitution which you should take thither. You will probably obtain your object better by adopting a regular system of training, living plainly and well, but temperately, and taking plenty of exercise in the open air.

DON JUAN.—The Herald's College is the best authority upon all questions connected with armorial bearings; though Burke's "Encyclopædia of Heraldry," or General Armory of England, Scotland, and Ireland, which comprises a registry of all armorial bearings, crests, and mottoes, from the earliest period to the present time, including the more recent grants of the College of Arms, will probably answer your purpose. It may be consulted at the British Museum. (The handwriting is both gentlemanly and good.)

JEANETTE.—Your surmise is quite correct; we do not approve of such exhibitions, whether in theatres or anywhere else. As regards the special instances to which you allude, the influence of sight has a great deal to do with the motions and positions of all acrobats, whether dancers on

tight ropes or dancers on one foot; its utility becoming greater as the base of support becomes narrower. Sight enables every one to judge of his equilibrium; and a rope-dancer so one-foot dancer could not stand erect if he were not continually directed by the eye as to the position necessary to be observed in order that the perpendicular drawn from his centre of gravity may fall upon the base of support. This is nearly the whole of the secret of these singular performances.

Q. Q.—Dreaming, if we mistake not, principally arises from bodily or mental disorder. In somnambulism, the action of the will seems ordinarily to be more vigorous.

ALP. P.—To be inattentive at any time when spoken to, does most certainly show a want of politeness; and such a fault should be especially guarded against. (The handwriting is tolerably good.)

J. J.—You are quite right—the Chinese have no alphabet. Every character they use is a significant of some one thing or object—that is, a hieroglyph. The number of these characters which they employ is necessarily very great—probably more than 50,000.

L. M. S.—"Metaphor" is a figure of speech used in speaking or writing, which adds light and strength to a description; and consequently makes a near approach to painting. Thus, we speak of an arm of the sea, or the foot of a hill.

W. B., who is twenty-two years of age, tall, dark complexion, black eyes, with £180 a year, would like to correspond with a young lady about the same age, with a view to matrimony.

A. S. is desirous to commence a correspondence with a gentleman matrimonially disposed. Is eighteen years of age, of medium height, dark complexion, good-looking, well educated, musical, thoroughly domesticated, amiable in disposition, and quite able to manage a house and make a home happy.

ARTHUR J. P. is anxious to obtain a matrimonial introduction to a young lady. Is twenty years of age, of fair complexion, with blue eyes and dark brown hair; is 5½ ft. in height, and has very fair prospects.

THE INFLUENCE OF LOVE.

Dear little birds, I never have heard

Your song so merry as to-day:

I ne'er before have seen ye trip

So blithe and happy at your play.

The fields look greener, and sweet buds

Give birth to infant blossoms now,

A heavenly crown of beauty rare

Is brightly clasped on Nature's brow.

The azure of yon spotless sky

To-day more lovely doth appear.

The sun in glorious strength doth reign,

No sultry shade dare shed a tear.

Night stealth on, and softly spreads

A greyish mantle o'er the blue—

The moon her purest silver teems,

And earth's parched lips now kiss the dew.

FANNY E. F.

E. B. S., seventeen years of age, fair, with grey eyes and dark brown hair, and of medium height, would like to correspond matrimonially with a gentleman, who should be of dark complexion, and if belonging to the nautical profession preferred.

LEZZIE G., a brunette, twenty-one years of age, 5 ft. in height, having light brown wavy hair and blue eyes, lively, affectionate, good tempered, and thoroughly domesticated, would be happy to correspond matrimonially with a gentleman from twenty-five to thirty years of age.

A. W., who is twenty-two years of age, of fair complexion, with blue eyes, well educated, musical, of a cheerful and amiable disposition, very domesticated, and quite competent to make a home comfortable, would be happy to enter into a correspondence with a gentleman, with a view to matrimony.

J. R., a son of Neptune, would like to receive a matrimonial introduction to a young lady, about twenty-one years of age, who must be domesticated, but need not be endowed with beauty. He is 5 ft. 6 in. in height, has dark hair and eyes, considered good-looking, and is twenty-three years of age.

LOVELY GEORGE, who is thirty-four years of age, has a comfortable home already furnished, and will receive between £600 and £700 on his marriage, is anxious to meet with a domesticated lady, possessed of a similar sum, and disposed to take him for better for worse. *Carte de visite* exchanged.

VIGILANS, who is twenty years of age, 5 feet 2 inches in height, considered very good-looking, having dark hair, a small moustache, very respectably connected, and will shortly be in the receipt of a moderate income, would be happy to correspond matrimonially with a lady, who must not be over nineteen years of age, petite, and a pretty brunette; and if in possession or expectation of any property, so much the better.

T. T. M.—The substance which forms the teeth is of excessive hardness, particularly the external layer or enamel, which is indeed so hard that it strikes fire with steel, a hardness which is indispensably necessary. Human teeth are formed almost entirely of carbonate and phosphate of lime. In 100 parts, 99½ consist of these salts, the remainder being of animal matter. The enamel, to which your question refers, is almost entirely devoid of blood; and to this cause its whiteness and great hardness is to be attributed. (The handwriting is very good.)

G. A.—The most obvious physical "cause of cats seeing best at night," and catching other animals by surprise, is owing to the peculiar structure of their eyes. In man and most other animals the pupil of the eye is capable of a certain degree of dilatation and contraction: it enlarges a little when the light is faint, and contracts when the light is too splendid. But in cats and night birds, as owls, &c., the contraction and dilatation are so great, that the pupil, which is round in the dark, becomes, when exposed to much light, long and narrow like a line. Hence it is that these animals see better in the night.

CLARA W.—In making imitations of fruit in wax you must proceed as follows:—The materials of which moulds for wax fruit should be composed is the best plaster of Paris, which is very inexpensive, and can be obtained from any of the Italian figure-makers in bags containing 14 or 7 pounds. If

this cannot, however, be procured, the cheaper plaster from the oil shops may be used, but care must be taken to get it quite fresh; because, if the plaster is faulty the results of the modelling will, of course, be more or less so. It is the property of plaster of Paris to form a chemical union with water, and to form a paste which, very readily "sets," or hardens into a substitute as hard and dense as chalk. The mould must, therefore, be made by an impression from the object to be imitated, made upon the plaster before it "sets."

E. F., who has been rather secluded from society, is 5 ft. 9 in. in height, of fair complexion, good tempered, and holds an appointment at £150 per annum, would be happy to correspond matrimonially with any young lady disposed to assume the fetters of Hymen.

W. H. P., a young man twenty-five years of age, 5 ft. 10 in. in height, having a salary of £250 a year, and in expectation of something handsome at the decease of an uncle eighty-nine years of age, is in want of a partner for life. She must be amiable; but good looks not requisite. In fact, would prefer a plain face to any other. She must be from 5 ft. to 5 ft. 6 in. height. *Carte de visite* requisite.

ROS ROY, who is twenty-six years of age, 5 ft. 8 in. in height, of fair complexion, has blue eyes, light brown hair, and moustache, and considered very good-looking, musical, with a good temper and a cheerful disposition, well educated, and possessing a moderate income, is anxious to form a matrimonial engagement with a young lady, who must be of good looking, of respectable family, and thoroughly domesticated.

MOOR, NOOK, and NORTON, wish to open a matrimonial correspondence with three gentlemen. "Moor" is seventeen years of age, tall, very fair, and domesticated. "Nook" is seventeen years of age, rather fair, tall, and well educated. "Norton" is eighteen years of age, of middle height, has dark hair and eyes, and is very domesticated.

FORBET-ME-NOT and PASHION FLOWER would like to commence a matrimonial correspondence with two gentlemen. "Forget-me-not" is 5 ft. 2 in. in height, amiable, very pretty, with large, dark, melancholy eyes, dark hair and moustache, and very small figure. "Pashion Flower" is tall, full, and majestic (but not in the slightest manner fat), 5 ft. 8 in. in height, good figure, with clear complexion, grey eyes, and light brown hair; is very loving, indisposed to marry, and twenty-two years of age. Both are highly respectable, well educated, and thoroughly domesticated. (The handwriting is ladylike.)

ELIZIE, WENDE, and HARRIE, three sisters, are desirous of communicating, with a view to matrimony, with three gentlemen. "Elizie" is twenty-one years of age, has a small graceful figure, black hair, hazel eyes, and a lively disposition. "Wende" is nineteen years of age, tall and modest, of fair complexion, has grey eyes, and is of a lively and amiable disposition. "Harrie" is seventeen years of age, of medium height, and graceful, a brunette, with dark eyes, and of a merry and loving disposition. "Elizie," "Wende," and "Harrie" are the daughters of a tradesman, have received a good education, understand music and dancing, and are also domesticated. *Carte de visite* is exchanged.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED.—"Amor," will be very glad to initiate a matrimonial correspondence with "Lionel L." is twenty-five years of age, 5 ft. 6 in. in height, dark, considered very good-looking and gentlemanly, of good family, thoroughly temperate and steady, possesses a good position in society as a professional man, and would exchange *carte de visite* in perfect good faith—"May" would not only correspond matrimonially with "Fortitude," is twenty-two years of age, tall and gentle, has dark eyes, and is considered good-looking, of an amiable disposition, and would endeavour to make a loving and industrious wife—"Victor" and "Noble" would be happy to correspond matrimonially and exchange *carte de visite* with "Lily" and "Violet." "Victor" is tall, with dark eyes, black hair, and dark complexion, and considered good-looking. "Noble" is also tall, with fair complexion, brown hair, and blue eyes, and very good-looking. Both would make kind, affectionate husbands, and each has lately inherited a good fortune—"J. A. G." would like to exchange *carte de visite* with "Rose Mand," with a view to matrimony. Is twenty-two years of age, 5 ft. 11 in. in height, has blue eyes, dark hair, is very amiable in disposition and distinguished in appearance, and has a good income, with a prospect of more in a short time—"G. F." will be pleased to correspond matrimonially with "Camille." Is twenty-six years of age, tall, moderately good-looking, and holds a respectable position in Her Majesty's service, and having lately returned from foreign lands, would be happy to enjoy the comforts of an English home with "Camille."—"Mary B." would be pleased to hear further and with more precise particulars from either "J. P." or "T. S." and would like to exchange *carte de visite* with "Rose D." who is twenty-two years of age, dark, and of medium height, would be happy to correspond matrimonially with "J. J. (No. 92)." "Lionel," an English girl, who will receive a fortune on her wedding-day, and "Janet," a Scottish lassie, would be happy to hear further from "E. H." with a view to matrimony—"Lionel" would like to correspond matrimonially with "Robin Hood." Is twenty-nine years of age, and tall, has dark brown hair and eyes, and is very domesticated—"Frank Weston" is desirous to hear further from "Annie," with a view to matrimony. Is twenty-seven years of age, 5 ft. 10 in. in height, with light Auburn hair, considered good-looking, of an amiable disposition, fond of home, an engineer by profession, and in receipt of an income sufficient to maintain a home comfortably. *Carte de visite* to be exchanged.

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